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Die Stadt in der Spätantike – Niedergang oder Wandel?

Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums
in München am 30. und 31. Mai 2003



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Vorwort

Dieser Band vereinigt die Beiträge zu einem internationalen Kolloquium, das am 30. und 31. Mai 2003 unter dem Titel „Die Stadt in der Spätantike – Niedergang oder Wandel?“ an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München stattgefunden hat. Die Spätantike hat lange unter dem Odium gelitten, sie sei eine typische Spätzeit mit zahlreichen Dekaden- und Verfallserscheinungen gewesen; und diese Betrachtungsweise hat bis in die ausgehenden 70er Jahre des 20. Jhs. auch die Beschäftigung mit der städtischen Kultur dieser Epoche bestimmt. Den Beginn einer Neubewertung zahlreicher Phänomene des spätantiken Städtewesens markierte dann ohne Zweifel das zu Beginn der 80er Jahre erschienene, monumentale Werk von Claude LEPELLEY „Les cités de l'Afrique romaine au Bas Empire“, das der Forschung eine anders geartete Perspektive eröffnete.¹ LEPELLEYS Arbeiten haben auch im weiteren die Erforschung des spätantiken Städtewesens – und zwar nicht nur in Africa – sehr stark mitbestimmt; so ist nicht zuletzt seiner Initiative das 1993 in Paris veranstaltete Kolloquium „La fin de la cité antique et le début de la cité médiévale“ zu verdanken, in dem das Ende der antiken und der Beginn der mittelalterlichen Stadtkultur ins Blickfeld genommen wurde.²

In den 90er Jahren und zu Beginn des 21. Jhs. folgte eine Reihe weiterer Kongreßberichte und Sammelbände, die in aller Deutlichkeit gezeigt haben, daß trotz aller Neuansätze der Zustand der Städte, ihrer Institutionen und ihrer Eliten während der Spätantike noch immer kontrovers diskutiert wird. So setzte ein von Neil CHRISTIE und Simon LOSEBY herausgegebener Sammelband einen starken Akzent auf „Towns in Transition“, versuchte also die zahlreichen Wandlungsprozesse in den spätantiken Städten herauszuarbeiten, ohne diese *a priori* negativ zu bewerten. Dagegen ist jedoch gerade in den letzten Jahren wieder zunehmend betont worden, daß die spätantike Stadtkultur nicht nur irgendwann ihr Ende gefunden haben müsse, sondern daß bereits zuvor ein starker Niedergang der klassischen Stadtstrukturen eingesetzt habe. „Towns in Decline“ heißt denn auch ein erst vor kurzem erschienener Band; und seine prononcierteste Ausprägung hat diese Richtung dann sicherlich in dem Buch gefunden, das als Diskussionsgrundlage für die Münchener Tagung gedient hat, nämlich in Wolfgang LIEBESCHUETZ' lange erwartetem *opus magnum* „The Decline and Fall of the Roman City“.³

Aus dieser Forschungsgeschichte ergab sich der von uns gewählte Untertitel des Kolloquiums: „Niedergang oder Wandel?“ Es soll einerseits diskutiert werden, unter welchem dieser beiden Oberbegriffe sich die unbestreitbaren Verände-

¹ Lepelley 1979/81.

² Lepelley 1996.

³ Christie/Loseby 1996; Slater 2000; Liebeschuetz 2001.

rungen in der spätantiken Stadtkultur eher fassen lassen, falls eine solche Zuspitzung überhaupt möglich ist. Auf der anderen Seite geht es um eine stärkere Differenzierung der sehr komplexen Transformationsprozesse in den Städten während der Spätantike. Das betrifft zum einen die zeitliche Ebene, denn es ist ohne weiteres einsichtig, daß der von uns gewählte breite chronologische Rahmen – vom späten 3. bis zum frühen 7. Jh. – vermutlich auch in Hinblick auf die Entwicklung der Städte einer weiteren Untergliederung bedarf. Wolfgang LIEBESCHUETZ hat hier mit seiner treffenden Unterscheidung in eine „Late City“ und eine „Later Late City“ bereits einen sehr interessanten Interpretationsrahmen vorgegeben,⁴ den es nun in verschiedenen Kontexten zu testen gilt. Fast noch wichtiger scheint aber eine genauere Betrachtung der unterschiedlichen regionalen Szenarien zu sein. Das riesige römische Reich mit seinen ca. 2000 eigenständigen Gemeinden zerfiel in zahlreiche ganz verschieden strukturierte Gebiete, in denen sich das Städtewesen keineswegs einheitlich entwickelte; und dies gilt, wie man mittlerweile immer klarer sehen kann, gerade auch für die Spätantike. Untersucht werden soll deshalb, ob sich so etwas wie regionale *patterns* mit jeweils eigenständigen Charakteristika herausarbeiten lassen und wie diese mit reichsweit zu beobachtenden Umstrukturierungsprozessen interagierten.

Größere Partien des vorliegenden Bandes sind darum Überblicken zur Entwicklung des spätantiken Städtewesens in zentralen Regionen des römischen Reiches gewidmet, wobei hier ein Schwerpunkt auf die Gebiete rund um das Mittelmeer gelegt wurde, da sich in den Randprovinzen des Imperium andere Konstellationen ergaben, die wesentlich stärker durch externe Faktoren beeinflusst wurden (Teil I und II). Der dritte Teil widmet sich dann wichtigen Strukturen innerhalb der spätantiken Städte, die auch in dem Werk von LIEBESCHUETZ eine zentrale Rolle spielen: Der munizipalen Verwaltung und deren Institutionen, der städtischen Inschriftenkultur der Spätantike, dem christlichen Klerus sowie der innerstädtischen Gewalt. Es ist uns eine ganz besondere Ehre, daß Wolfgang LIEBESCHUETZ, dessen Werk das Kolloquium gewidmet war, es übernommen hat, den Band mit einem zusammenfassenden Beitrag abzuschließen, der die zahlreichen Diskussionsansätze der Tagung aufgreift und sich noch einmal der im Untertitel des Kolloquiums formulierten Fragestellung zuwendet.

Zum Schluß dieses Vorwortes gilt es, unseren herzlichen Dank an diejenigen Personen und Institutionen auszusprechen, die die Durchführung der Tagung in München und die anschließende Drucklegung der Konferenzakten ermöglicht haben: der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft, der Münchener Universitätsgesellschaft e.V. sowie den Herausgebern der Reihe *Historia Einzelschriften*.

⁴ Vgl. Liebeschuetz 1996.

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La cité africaine tardive, de l'apogée du IV^e siècle à l'effondrement du VII^e siècle

CLAUDE LEPELLEY (Paris)

De 1955 à 1964, donc dans les années sombres de la guerre, puis aux premiers temps de l'indépendance, le directeur des Antiquités de l'Algérie était Jean LASSUS. Il avait accompli l'essentiel de son œuvre archéologique en Syrie, où il avait étudié les monuments paléochrétiens et byzantins.¹ En Algérie, il s'intéressa donc particulièrement aux documents de cette période, ce qui le conduisit à publier en 1981 les fouilles de la forteresse byzantine de Timgad.² Il se félicitait donc de mon intérêt pour l'Afrique antique tardive. Or il me dit un jour que, si je visitais les ruines d'une ville africaine antique, ainsi celles de Timgad, de Djemila, de Tipasa, je devais avoir conscience que je me trouvais dans une ville byzantine: de fait, l'aspect actuel des ruines correspondait à l'état de l'agglomération dans la dernière phase de son occupation. Cette réflexion de LASSUS impliquait deux considérations. D'abord la nécessité de prendre en compte pour l'histoire de ces villes la longue durée: l'Antiquité tardive (y compris la période byzantine) en aval, et aussi en amont une éventuelle histoire pré-romaine, punique, numide, maure. D'autre part, LASSUS constatait, au terme de cette longue histoire, une disparition (en tout cas pour certaines villes, comme Timgad et Djemila). Le site de Timgad, comme celui de nombreuses autres villes africaines, avait été abandonné après la dernière phase byzantine et enseveli sous les alluvions, jusqu'à ce que les archéologues viennent exhumer les ruines à l'époque contemporaine.

Je voudrais examiner ici les deux implications de l'observation de LASSUS, la longue durée de l'histoire de ces villes et leur éventuelle disparition. Cette réflexion (comme du reste toute étude sur l'Antiquité tardive) ne peut faire aujourd'hui l'économie d'une controverse qui agite beaucoup ces temps-ci le petit monde des spécialistes et qu'il convient d'évoquer brièvement. Une école anglo-saxonne fort dynamique, se réclamant de Peter BROWN, veut faire de cette époque (en y incluant les premiers siècles du Moyen Âge) une phase historique totalement autonome, "a distinctive and quite decisive period, that stands on its own".³ Ces historiens ont tendance à dénier toute importance à la disparition de l'empire romain en Occident, aux invasions germaniques, et globalement à tous les événements politiques. Leur insistance sur la continuité les amène à nier tout déclin (l'idée même d'un déclin serait 'politiquement incorrecte'), ainsi qu'à

¹ Cf. LASSUS 1947.

² LASSUS 1981.

³ Bowersock/Brown/Grabar 1999, IX.

privilégier de façon presque exclusive les faits de mentalité (culturelle et religieuse en particulier), aux dépens, non seulement de l'histoire des événements, mais aussi de celle des structures politiques, sociales et économiques. Ajoutons que cette école, malgré son exaltation de la continuité, juge de peu d'intérêt le maintien au Bas-Empire de l'idéal culturel gréco-romain classique, ainsi dans la littérature ou les attitudes sociales: Symmaque et Libanius ne sont pas les auteurs préférés de ses partisans. Généralement bien accueillies dans le monde anglo-saxon, ces conceptions ont cependant suscité de très dures critiques, en particulier de la part d'Andrea GIARDINA dans son article "Esplosione di Tardoantico"⁴ de 1999 et, en 2001, de Wolfgang LIEBESCHUETZ, dans son grand livre *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City*⁵ ainsi que dans son article "Late Antiquity and the Concept of Decline".⁶ Ces critiques sont, à mon avis, pertinentes, ainsi celles qui contestent une vue exagérément optimiste de l'ensemble de la période, vue qui nierait radicalement toute idée de déclin même pour les premiers siècles du haut Moyen Âge. Or on doit constater que l'Afrique offre un terrain privilégié à cette controverse, avec une absence de déclin au IV^e siècle, confirmant la thèse 'optimiste', et la disparition ultérieure de nombreuses villes (et le retour à la steppe de zones cultivées), allant dans le sens des partisans du *decline and fall*, ainsi W. LIEBESCHUETZ.

L'histoire de la fin de l'Antiquité en Afrique paraît donc offrir à chacune des deux théories un exemple paroxystique; mais, on le verra, la contradiction n'est qu'apparente, car on doit distinguer deux phases successives et distinctes, correspondant à ce que W. LIEBESCHUETZ appelle *Late Antiquity* et *Late Late* ou *Later Late Antiquity*, notion qu'accepte Peter BROWN,⁷ mais qui met en question l'unité d'une période supposée "distinctive and standing on its own". De fait, on ne saurait envisager comme un tout indivisible une histoire qui s'étend sur les quatre siècles séparant l'avènement de Dioclétien de la conquête arabe soit, pour l'Afrique, la date symbolique de la prise de Carthage en 698; une histoire, aussi, qui concerne toute l'aire géographique immense couverte par l'empire romain, dont les différentes parties évoluèrent très différemment.

La prospérité des villes africaines entre Dioclétien et l'invasion vandale: une évidence confirmée

La critique par A. GIARDINA et W. LIEBESCHUETZ d'une vue exagérément optimiste du monde antique tardif me concerne car, dans le livre dont les deux tomes furent publiés successivement en 1979 et 1981,⁸ j'avais été amené à constater la prospérité des villes et des campagnes africaines au IV^e siècle et au début du V^e siècle.

⁴ Giardina 1999.

⁵ Liebeschuetz 2001a.

⁶ Liebeschuetz 2001b.

⁷ Brown 1997, 28. C'est une distinction que j'approuve, mais que critique Giardina 1999, 170.

⁸ Lepelley 1979/81.

au témoignage de centaines d'inscriptions, au vu de l'exaltation par de nombreux textes littéraires contemporains de la richesse de l'Afrique et de ses multiples cités. La partie orientale de l'Afrique romaine, de la Tripolitaine à la Numidie, a bénéficié pendant les quelque 150 années qui s'étendent de Dioclétien à la conquête vandale (284-429) d'une conjoncture économique très favorable. De même, j'ai pu démontrer que le système municipal romain fonctionnait encore, dans cette région au IV^e siècle, de manière satisfaisante et très proche de la tradition du Haut-Empire: s'y étaient maintenus les structures et l'esprit de la cité classique, faisant de cette région au IV^e siècle un conservatoire des institutions et des traditions du Haut-Empire, ainsi que de l'urbanisme qui en était l'expression matérielle. Dès la rédaction du premier tome du livre, paru en 1979, j'avais pu observer que cette analyse était confirmée par les découvertes archéologiques. Depuis, celles-ci se sont multipliées, fondées désormais sur des datations céramologiques précises, et toutes ont confirmé ces conclusions: l'Afrique a connu au IV^e siècle un véritable apogée de ses villes et de ses campagnes. Lors de la rédaction de mon livre, j'avais déjà pu m'appuyer sur d'importants travaux archéologiques: ceux de Paul-Albert FÉVRIER à Cuicul (Djemila; Numidie) et à Sétif (Sétif; Maurétanie Sitifienne),⁹ et ceux de Noël DUVAL à Sufetula (Sbeitla; Byzacène) et Ammaedara (Haïdra; Proconsulaire).¹⁰ Ils démontraient que ces villes, non seulement n'avaient connu au Bas-Empire aucune régression de leur espace bâti ni de leur population, mais que de nouveaux quartiers avaient été construits, de sorte que l'apogée de leur extension se situait aux IV^e et V^e siècles. Les recherches archéologiques menées depuis, surtout en Tunisie, ont confirmé ces conclusions. Je n'en citerai que quelques unes. Ainsi la grande campagne internationale de fouilles à Carthage a permis la découverte d'éléments du rempart élevé sous Théodose II, révélant que fut enclose dans ce mur la quasi totalité de la grande ville du Haut-Empire.¹¹ À Sétif, en Algérie, la fouille dirigée par Elizabeth FENTRESS entre 1977 et 1984 a confirmé et complété celle de FÉVRIER, attestant l'apogée de la ville à l'époque tardive, et, nous y reviendrons, révélant une continuité de l'occupation urbaine à l'époque arabe.¹² De même d'importantes prospections ont attesté la densité de l'occupation et de l'exploitation de zones rurales; ainsi le *survey* tuniso-danois de la région de Segermes, à la base du Cap Bon,¹³ et celui que dirigea Bruce HITCHNER dans les hautes steppes de la Tunisie centrale, dans la zone de Kasserine, l'antique Cillium, révélant une mise en valeur de la région à partir du II^e siècle, fondée sur l'exploitation intensive de l'olivier, culminant aux III^e et IV^e siècles, déclinant lentement ensuite jusqu'au retour au nomadisme pastoral achevé dès le VII^e siècle.¹⁴ Ces recherches et ces datations sont évidemment rendues possibles grâce à la connaissance de la

⁹ Février 1964; Février/Gaspary/Guéry 1965.

¹⁰ Duval 1964; 1982a; 1982b; cf. Duval/Baratte 1971.

¹¹ Voir plans reproduits par Ennabli 1997, 8, et Leone 2002, 238.

¹² Fentress 1991.

¹³ Dietz/Ladjimi Sebaï/Ben Hassen 1995.

¹⁴ Hitchner 1988; 1990.

typologie de la céramique sigillée claire africaine, acquise en particulier grâce aux travaux de John HAYES.¹⁵

On a pu ainsi constater que l'impact des crises du III^e siècle avait été faible dans cette partie de l'Empire, et que le puissant essor constaté à l'époque antonino-sévérienne se poursuivait sans rupture au IV^e siècle. Une preuve archéologique est qu'on ne peut pas discerner de différence stratigraphique significative entre un niveau du Haut-Empire et un niveau des IV^e/V^e siècles. Dans une maison, ce peut être les quelques centimètres séparant une mosaïque initiale de celle qui fut posée dessus à l'époque romaine tardive. Les déblais ou détritiques étant évacués au fur et à mesure, le niveau initial, celui des dalles du forum et des rues, était toujours conservé pour le sol des édifices construits au IV^e ou au V^e siècle. Ainsi à Cuicul (Djemila), pour les maisons du centre urbain étudiées par Michèle BLANCHARD-LEMÉE:¹⁶ elles occupent les espaces laissés libres par les monuments publics élevés au II^e siècle (forum, portiques, basilique, capitole, thermes), mais elles furent reconstruites ou agrandies (parfois grâce à la réunion en une seule de plusieurs maisons antérieures) et somptueusement ornées de mosaïques à l'époque tardive.

L'optimisme manifesté par les historiens et les archéologues récents de l'Afrique romaine tardive n'a donc pas été déterminé par un présupposé ou une position de principe, mais par une analyse rigoureuse de toute une immense documentation épigraphique et archéologique. J'avais, pour ma part, fondé ma démonstration sur l'examen d'environ 500 inscriptions révélant le dynamisme de la vie urbaine et municipale au IV^e siècle. On remarque qu'ici, l'évidente continuité entre le II^e et le IV^e siècle amène à contester l'idée d'une véritable autonomie de l'Antiquité tardive, qui supposerait une rupture franche avec l'époque classique. Cette observation peut susciter, en tout cas pour l'Afrique, des réticences quant à la pleine pertinence de la périodisation habituelle du *Tardoantico* en amont.

Il ne me paraît pas devoir aujourd'hui procéder à une rétractation, car les découvertes épigraphiques et archéologiques accomplies depuis ont, le plus souvent, confirmé ces données. Ainsi, une cinquantaine d'inscriptions nouvelles se sont ajoutées aux quelque cinq cents que j'avais inventoriées; j'ai présenté dans une étude récente une sélection de 14 d'entre elles.¹⁷ Ce fut pour moi une grande satisfaction de constater que ces découvertes confirmaient et renforçaient mon analyse initiale, notamment en allongeant la liste des travaux publics accomplis dans les cités au IV^e siècle, en particulier au temps de Dioclétien et de Valentinien I^{er}, Valens et Gratien. Jetons un bref regard sur ces textes. À Sufes (Byzacène), on construit sous Dioclétien un arc, soit une porte monumentale (A. Beschtaouch, BSNF 1989, 258-260; AE 1992, 1763). À Abthugnos (Proconsulaire), sous Valens et Gratien, on restaure le forum, c'est à dire ses portiques, et on l'orne de statues, probablement récupérées dans des temples désaffectés (N. Ferchiou, BCTH Afr. N.S. 24, 1993-95, 197-202; AE 1995, 1655); un évergète

¹⁵ Hayes 1972; 1980. Cf. Tortorella 1987; Mackensen/Schneider 2002.

¹⁶ Blanchard-Lemée 1975.

¹⁷ Lepelley 2003.

restaure aussi dans cette même ville et à la même date le podium du Capitole, qualifié de rostris pour souligner la romanité de la cité, et il y élève une statue de l'*Urbs aeterna Roma*, avatar désacralisé de la *dea Roma* (N. Ferchiou, in: *L'Africa Romana* 7, 1989, 754-758; AE 1991, 1641-1644). À Lambèse, en Numidie, on restaure un portique sous Valentinien et Valens (J. Marcillet-Jaubert, ZPE 69, 1987, 213; AE 1987, 1062). À Leges Maiores, toujours en Numidie, un évêque flamme perpétuel restaure la curie qu'il qualifie de *genitalis*, ancestrale, considérant donc l'hérédité des charges municipales comme un honneur et non une contrainte (J. Marcillet-Jaubert, *Epigraphica* 41, 1979, 70-72, et F. Jacques, ZPE 59, 1985, 146-150; AE 1982, 961). Une inscription tout récemment publiée, trouvée dans la petite ville qui s'élevait à Henchir el Oust (Proconsulaire; à une trentaine de km au sud-ouest de Thuburbo Maius; N. Ferchiou/L. Ladjimi Sebaï, *Africa* 19, 2002, 29-45), datable probablement de la fin du IV^e siècle, révèle des constructions, dont celle d'une "curie de tous les honneurs" (*curia omnium honorum*). Ces documents nouveaux confirment donc mon analyse antérieure sur la vitalité de la civilisation urbaine et municipale classique dans l'Afrique romaine au IV^e siècle¹⁸, et sur la prospérité économique qui en était la condition nécessaire. On a pu même constater que plusieurs agglomérations avaient reçu à cette époque le statut de cité, ce que j'avais nié à tort en 1979 (ainsi Leges Maiores en Numidie,¹⁹ la *civitas Faustianensis* et Mididi en Byzacène²⁰).

On pourrait penser que cette analyse constitue une critique du livre de W. LIEBESCHUETZ qui défend un retour à l'idée de déclin, souligné par le titre délibérément gibbonien de son livre, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City*. Il n'en est rien. Il convient d'abord de souligner que les critiques adressées par W. LIEBESCHUETZ et A. GIARDINA aux négateurs de tout déclin à l'époque tardive ne visent pas les analyses rigoureuses d'inscriptions ou de témoignages archéologiques effectuées en Afrique ou ailleurs, mais une manière de construction idéologique, réduisant tout à l'histoire des mentalités et récusant *a priori* toute constatation de déclin. De fait, W. LIEBESCHUETZ considère comme des acquis incontestables les résultats des enquêtes épigraphiques et archéologiques démontrant la prospérité des cités africaines au IV^e siècle, et même au V^e siècle. Ainsi, il écrit: "La forme romaine de la cité classique resta très longtemps intacte en Afrique, où le centre monumental des villes resta plus ou moins inchangé, et où les institutions classiques fonctionnèrent jusqu'en 400 et au delà";²¹ ou encore: "Les cités africaines furent les plus florissantes des provinces de langue latine jusqu'à la fin du IV^e siècle. Ce ne fut qu'au cours du V^e siècle que commença en Afrique le déclin de l'urbanisme monumental classique, constaté en Gaule, en Espagne et dans la plus grande partie des Balkans plus d'un siècle plus tôt".²² LIEBESCHUETZ constate

¹⁸ Dans Lepelley 2002, 272-285 j'ai souligné le maintien, en Afrique au temps de saint Augustin, des valeurs civiques traditionnelles permettant d'unir la population d'une cité par delà des oppositions religieuses pourtant violentes.

¹⁹ Jacques 1992.

²⁰ Lepelley 1994 (*civitas Faustianensis*); Ben Baaziz 2000, 281-283 (Mididi).

²¹ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 74.

²² Ibid., 102.

d'ailleurs que les fouilles attestent encore une vie urbaine riche et active, à Carthage et dans les autres villes, à l'époque du royaume vandale, en tout cas jusqu'au milieu du V^e siècle.²³

Une *retractatio* partielle

La nécessité de tempérer une vue trop optimiste s'est imposée à moi dès le printemps 1981, c'est à dire au moment même où paraissait à Paris le second tome de mon livre sur les cités de l'Afrique romaine au Bas-Empire, à cause d'une découverte philologique majeure. À cette même date, en effet, Johannes DIVJAK édita à Vienne une trentaine de lettres nouvelles de saint Augustin qu'il avait découvertes et qui présentaient un immense intérêt historique.²⁴ Si certains passages de ces nouveaux documents confirmaient mes vues, "d'autres m'obligeaient à les réviser, car ils jetaient une lumière crue sur l'extrême dureté des rapports sociaux et sur la misère rurale, qui étaient l'envers du brillant décor de la prospérité des cités africaines que j'avais décrit".²⁵ La richesse des campagnes était certes indubitable, mais les revenus se révélaient répartis d'une manière cruellement inégale.²⁶ La réalité apparaissait donc comparable à ces masques antiques à deux visages opposés, l'un souriant et l'autre sinistre. Un bon nombre des études que j'ai écrites après la publication des lettres Divjak et qui sont consacrées à la vie rurale, soulignent ce contraste. Il en est ainsi pour mon commentaire de la lettre *Ad Salvium*, ce texte anonyme africain conservé parmi les *spuria* de Sulpice Sévère, que Peter BROWN m'avait fait connaître:²⁷ ce document révèle clairement la pénible condition des colons employés sur les domaines ruraux, condition qui n'était nullement, comme certains l'avaient suggéré, une création de l'imaginaire des historiens modernes.

J'avais déjà relevé en 1979 une autre donnée obligeant à pondérer une vue trop optimiste de la prospérité des villes: l'Afrique des multiples cités correspondait à l'Est de l'Afrique du Nord, soit la côte de Tripolitaine, l'actuelle Tunisie, la Numidie. Même là, les régions du Sud pré-saharien apparaissaient pour l'essentiel peuplées de Berbères peu (ou non) romanisés, qui pouvaient représenter une menace, comme on le vit en Tripolitaine sous Valentinien I^{er}. Dans les Maurétanies, les villes paraissaient souvent des îlots de romanité entre des montagnes ou des steppes peuplées de tribus fort étrangères à la civilisation romaine et dont les insurrections étaient récurrentes.²⁸ La brillante civilisation urbaine de l'Afrique romaine tardive recelait donc des éléments de fragilité.

²³ Ibid., 97-99.

²⁴ CSEL 88 (Wien 1981); BA 46B (Paris 1987).

²⁵ Lepelley 2001, Introduction, p. 7.

²⁶ Je l'avais déjà constaté, au vu d'autres textes augustiniens, dans le premier tome de mes *Cités* (Lepelley 1979, 328-330), mais la découverte des lettres Divjak a beaucoup renforcé ma perception de ce contraste.

²⁷ Lepelley 1989.

²⁸ Lepelley 1979, 49-57.

Ajoutons que, parmi les villes très nombreuses et proches les unes des autres du nord de la Proconsulaire,²⁹ il est sûr que certaines s'appauvrirent et régressèrent dès avant la conquête vandale. Ainsi à Thugga (Dougga), ville très prospère sous le Haut-Empire et fouillée systématiquement, la quasi absence d'inscriptions et d'édifices chrétiens manifeste un déclin évident, alors que Thubursicu Bure (Téboursouk), ville située en contrebas, dans une vallée, sur la grande route de Carthage à Theveste, demeurait prospère.³⁰ Ajoutons que les deux tiers des chantiers éditaires connus par les inscriptions dans les cités africaines entre Dioclétien et l'invasion vandale commémorent des restaurations de monuments anciens, non des constructions d'édifices nouveaux.³¹ Cette constatation doit assurément tempérer l'optimisme de l'évaluation de l'activité urbaine. Il est toutefois vrai qu'à partir du milieu du IV^e siècle, la multiplication des constructions d'églises chrétiennes, parfois de grandes dimensions, donnait un nouvel essor à l'urbanisme et impliquait l'existence de disponibilités financières.

L'époque vandale et la première époque byzantine

Si l'on passe à l'histoire des villes africaines au temps du royaume vandale et de la domination byzantine, je suivrai d'assez près l'exposé du livre de W. LIEBESCHUETZ. Il a constaté, avons-nous dit, à la suite des archéologues, qu'on ne remarque pas de déclin urbain significatif à l'époque vandale. De belles mosaïques sont maintenant datées de cette période, les fouilles de Carthage révèlent des embellissements apportés alors à de riches maisons et des constructions de nouvelles demeures, pour lesquelles on ne sait si les propriétaires étaient romano-africains ou vandales.³² Mais de toute manière, les dirigeants carthaginois continuaient à jouir d'un train de vie sénatorial. Les sources écrites attestent le maintien des spectacles du cirque et de l'amphithéâtre. Une vie littéraire brillante s'épanouit, avec les œuvres du poète Dracontius et celles des auteurs de l'Anthologie Latine. Cependant, c'est à cette époque qu'on constate à Carthage et sur une plus large échelle dans les villes de l'intérieur que des habitations modestes empiètent sur des rues ou des espaces publics: les règlements antérieurs d'urbanisme sont donc moins respectés. Dans la seconde moitié du V^e siècle, les recherches archéologiques suggèrent que les bâtiments publics furent souvent abandonnés ou mal entretenus.³³ J'ajouterai un point: les confiscations de terres

²⁹ Région qu'on peut légitimement considérer comme sururbanisée.

³⁰ Poinssot 1958, 14-15. Aucun évêque de Thugga ne siégea aux conciles africains, sauf un seul (donatiste) à la conférence de Carthage en 411.

³¹ Lepelley 1979, 75-77.

³² Liebeschuetz 2001a, 97-99, observe que les archéologues n'ont pas retrouvé de traces significatives de destructions dues aux Vandales, sans qu'on puisse nier celles que relate Victor de Vita, *Historia persecutionis* 18, accomplies lors de la prise de Carthage en 439. Sur les mosaïques datables de l'époque vandale, voir Ben Abed/Duval 2000, ainsi que Clover 1982.

³³ La belle étude de Louis Maurin sur Thuburbo Maius à l'époque vandale (Maurin 1968) insiste sur ce déclin, tout en reconnaissant que la réduction de la ville à l'état de bourgade agricole ne doit pas être antérieure à la fin du VI^e siècle (p. 250).

au profit des Vandales et les exils des propriétaires romano-africains sont avérés dans la province proconsulaire, soit le nord de la Tunisie, la zone la plus densément urbanisée. Les villes étaient du coup privées de leurs dirigeants traditionnels, pourvoyeurs d'évergésies et gardiens des institutions municipales ancestrales.³⁴ Il est donc légitime de parler de déclin des villes durant le siècle de la domination vandale, mais nous devons aussi constater que ce déclin fut lent et qu'il ne peut aucunement être assimilé à un effondrement. Comme le constate W. LIEBESCHUETZ, en règle générale, au V^e siècle, les sites urbains ne furent pas abandonnés, même si les monuments publics paraissent avoir été négligés après le milieu du siècle.³⁵

Venons en, dans ce survol, à l'époque byzantine. La facile conquête de 533 vit l'effondrement du royaume vandale. Dans sa Pragmatique Sanction, Justinien affirma son intention de restaurer l'Afrique romaine telle qu'elle était un siècle auparavant, avant l'arrivée des Vandales et d'en rétablir la prospérité.³⁶ Un programme massif de constructions fut établi, qui devait privilégier les fortifications et les églises, mais à Carthage, les recherches archéologiques attestent aussi des travaux aux rues et au port. Evagrius (Histoire Ecclésiastique IV 18) affirme que Justinien fit restaurer et embellir à grands frais cent cinquante villes africaines, et cette œuvre est aussi exaltée dans le *De Aedificiis* de Procope (VI 6). Un très important effort financier fut donc accompli par l'autorité impériale, en particulier pour la construction de forteresses et de remparts protégeant les villes des incursions maures.³⁷ On a pu constater que dans des villes ceintes de remparts, l'enceinte enfermait une partie seulement de l'agglomération: ainsi à Theveste (Tébessa), le rempart toujours existant enclôt 7,50 hectares, mais des traces abondantes de constructions des V^e et VI^e siècles apparaissent sur un espace de 50 hectares.³⁸ Dans d'autres cas, la fortification était un simple refuge fortifié. Timgad, au témoignage de Procope, avait été vidée de sa population et rasée par les Maures, craignant que la ville ne serve de refuge à leurs ennemis.³⁹ Une inscription atteste la reconstruction de la ville sur l'ordre du patrice Solomon,⁴⁰ ce que confirment les archéologues.⁴¹ La ville fut alors dotée d'une énorme forteresse. L'inscription de dédicace des remparts de Cululis (Ain Jelloula, Byzacène) datable entre 539 et 544, affirme solennellement la volonté de restaurer dans la cité "délivrée de la terreur des Maures" le système municipal ancien: le cens (*censura*), un statut (*status* soit une constitution), des citoyens (*cives*), le droit (*ius*), des monuments publics (*moenia*), des fastes (des magis-

³⁴ Sur l'établissement des Vandales et la spoliation à leur profit des terres de la province proconsulaire, voir l'importante étude de Yves Modéran (Modéran 2002, 87-122), qui fait justice d'une théorie aberrante niant ces expropriations.

³⁵ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 98-99.

³⁶ CJI 27 (13 avril 534).

³⁷ Pringle 1981. Inscriptions de dédicace: Durliat 1981.

³⁸ Pringle 1981, 119.

³⁹ Procope, *Bellum Vandalicum* II 13, 26.

⁴⁰ AE 1911, 118.

⁴¹ Cf. Courtois 1951, 20.

trats).⁴² Je pense qu'il s'agissait, plutôt que d'une réalité, d'une velléité manifestant la nostalgie d'un rédacteur lettré pour l'idéal de la cité classique, de même que la *Pragmatica Sanction* de Justinien avait voulu, d'une manière qui devait se révéler irréaliste, un retour pur et simple à l'Afrique romaine d'avant les Vandales.

W. LIEBESCHUETZ écrit que l'époque byzantine a vu la disparition en Afrique de la littérature latine écrite par des laïcs sur des sujets profanes et même par des clercs sur des questions théologiques.⁴³ Cela n'est pas exact. Écrivait à Carthage dans les années 550–60 le poète Flavius Cresconius Corippus, à qui nous devons, outre des éloges de l'empereur Justin II et du questeur du Palais Anastasius, une extraordinaire épopée, la *Johannide*, relatant les guerres menées par le général Jean Troglita contre les Maures entre 544 et 552, œuvre en huit chants et des milliers d'hexamètres, imitée de l'*Énéide*, qui constitue un document d'une richesse exceptionnelle sur l'Afrique du temps (notamment sur les tribus berbères), et dont les qualités littéraires sont dignes d'éloge. Preuve qu'il existait toujours dans l'Afrique byzantine, au moins à Carthage, des lettrés laïcs et des écoles.

Les ruines de centaines de basiliques chrétiennes ont été retrouvées en Afrique, dont beaucoup récemment en Tunisie.⁴⁴ Ces églises paraissent s'être multipliées à partir du dernier quart du IV^e siècle; un bon nombre datent, semble-t-il, de l'époque vandale, malgré les mauvaises dispositions des rois à l'égard de l'église catholique. Pour la plus grande part, elles sont datables de l'époque byzantine (ou elles ont été l'objet de reconstructions ou d'importantes restaurations à cette époque). Certaines sont de vastes dimensions. Noël DUVAL a souvent souligné⁴⁵ que l'apparence modeste des ruines comparées à celles des édifices classiques est trompeuse: cela est dû au fait que le gros œuvre ne fut pas construit en *opus quadratum* (sauf de belles exceptions, comme la grande basilique de Tébessa); pourtant il s'agissait souvent de constructions de qualité, aux murs parés d'enduits soignés, au sol couvert de mosaïques. Ces multiples églises manifestent l'existence d'une population de fidèles restée abondante, et celle des ressources financières nécessaires pour leur construction. Leur présence et leur nombre (on en découvre toujours de nouvelles en Tunisie) obligent à récuser l'idée d'un déclin radical des villes au VI^e siècle; mais on doit ici constater que les structures ecclésiastiques avaient remplacé les institutions civiques, de même que les églises s'étaient substituées aux édifices habituels d'une cité romaine. Ce qui pouvait survivre des vieilles institutions municipales et du rôle des *curiales* était devenu dérisoire:⁴⁶ la ville byzantine était ordonnée autour de la forteresse et

⁴² AE 1996, 1704. Publiée par Pringle 1981, 319, puis par Durliat 1981, 37–42, cette grande inscription a été l'objet du commentaire exhaustif et substantiel d'Yves Modéran (Modéran 1996, 85–114), qui envisage toute la question de la renaissance des villes africaines au temps de Justinien.

⁴³ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 101.

⁴⁴ Béjaoui 1989; 2002.

⁴⁵ Duval 1972, spécialement p. 1167–1169.

⁴⁶ Je me sépare ici de l'opinion d'Y. Modéran (Modéran 1996, 85–89), qui pense, à la lumière de l'inscription de Cululis, que la survie et la restauration du système municipal classique furent effectives.

des églises, et non plus autour du forum. Cela a été montré avec beaucoup de pertinence pour Sufetula (Sbeitla) et Ammaedara (Haïdra) par Noël DUVAL.⁴⁷ Même si la ville subsistait, la cité au sens classique, si vivace en Afrique au IV^e siècle, avait disparu. On assiste alors, a écrit à propos de l'Italie Lellia CRACCO RUGGINI, à "une substitution massive des espaces religieux chrétiens aux espaces traditionnels de la cité romaine et païenne".⁴⁸ La mutation paraît radicale pour le cadre de vie, les mentalités, les institutions publiques; il est donc légitime de parler d'une fin de la cité antique, mais non d'une fin, ni même d'un déclin grave, de la vie urbaine.

Toutefois, l'évocation de la Johannide rappelle que l'Afrique byzantine fut troublée par des guerres violentes avec les tribus maures, tant celles du sud des provinces romaines que celles venues des confins sahariens de la Tripolitaine et de la Cyrénaïque.⁴⁹ La première suivit la conquête de 533, et elle dura de 534 à 539: l'euphorie du début fut donc de courte durée. La seconde guerre, la plus longue et la plus dure, dura de 544 à 552. Elle est bien connue par Procope et Corippus, qui attestent que les ravages furent considérables. La guerre reprit encore en 563; après la mort de Justinien en 565, elle se poursuivit sous son successeur Justin II. Nul doute que dans bien des régions, la Tripolitaine et la Byzacène en particulier, ces troubles amenèrent le déclin définitif d'un bon nombre de villes et, dans toute l'Afrique, un grave appauvrissement. Ce qui nous amène à évoquer la dernière phase de la longue histoire des villes romano-africaines, celle qui vit la disparition de beaucoup d'entre elles.

Le VII^e siècle: un effondrement?

L'image des villes africaines frappées d'une décadence très grave depuis le III^e siècle prévalait encore au milieu du XX^e siècle, quand Christian COURTOIS rédigeait son livre sur les Vandales (*Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, Paris 1955). Toutes les recherches menées depuis ont souligné le caractère fallacieux d'une telle vision, non seulement pour le IV^e siècle, mais même pour les deux siècles suivants. Historiens et archéologues ont donc retardé considérablement la datation du début du processus inexorable qui devait mener à la disparition d'un grand nombre des villes antiques d'Afrique. Cette fatale issue est pourtant advenue, et il importe de l'analyser. Il se révèle qu'il convient d'opposer ce que Noël DUVAL a appelé la haute époque byzantine,⁵⁰ où l'on constate un maintien de la prospérité, à une "dernière époque", postérieure au règne de Justinien et couvrant le VII^e siècle, qui vit un déclin radical de l'urbanisme. À l'appui de cette constatation, je donnerai une série d'exemples (et nullement un inventaire exhaustif) fondés sur des fouilles récentes et rigoureuses.

⁴⁷ Duval 1982a; 1982b.

⁴⁸ Cracco Ruggini 1989, 166.

⁴⁹ Cette question est renouvelée par les travaux d'Yves Modéran, depuis son article (Modéran 1986) sur le témoignage de Corippus.

⁵⁰ Duval 1982a, 619.

Bararus (Rougga; Byzacène, au sud-est d'El Jem): Des fouilles ont permis de connaître l'histoire urbaine de cette petite cité. Le forum et ses bâtiments adjacents datent des époques flavienne et antonine. Il paraît avoir été démantelé (avec arrachement des dalles) dès la seconde moitié du V^e siècle ou la première moitié du VI^e siècle. Deux celliers avec des amphores furent adossés contre le portique sud.⁵¹ Le premier raid arabe en 647 fut durement ressenti: a été découvert un trésor de 268 *solidi*, pièces d'or frappées entre les règnes de Maurice et de Constant II (582–647), dont la plus récente fut frappée à Carthage à cette dernière date.⁵² Les fouilleurs ont dégagé des installations artisanales d'époque fatimido-ziride. Pour les 150 ans intermédiaires, le site révèle des habitats dits "paléo-berbères" rudimentaires, en pierre sèche.

Belalis Maior (Henchir El-Faouar; nord de la Proconsulaire): Les fouilles menées par A. MAHJOUBI dans les années 1960–1971⁵³ ont mis au jour une petite ville lentement romanisée, qui adopta un riche urbanisme romain au II^e siècle, toujours en place et entretenu au IV^e siècle, et qui avait accédé au rang de colonie honoraire (au III^e siècle?). Des monuments chrétiens (deux basiliques connues) s'ajoutèrent aux édifices classiques. Selon A. MAHJOUBI, à la fin du VI^e et au VII^e siècle, le dallage du forum et des rues disparut sous les déblais, le niveau général du site montant de 1,30 mètre, suite, semble-t-il, à des destructions massives. Les édifices chrétiens furent détruits dans la seconde moitié du VII^e siècle. Un habitat subsista à l'époque arabe. Les fouilles furent menées avant que ne fût établie la typologie de la céramique sigillée claire africaine: la chronologie, fondée sur une stratigraphie très nette, est donc relative et non absolue.

Carthage: La campagne internationale de fouilles menée à Carthage a permis une avancée substantielle dans la connaissance, en particulier grâce aux travaux de l'équipe britannique.⁵⁴ Carthage au VII^e siècle paraît être constituée de sorte de gros hameaux groupant des églises, des monastères et des cimetières, entourés de pauvres habitations. On constate même dans la seconde moitié du VII^e siècle un processus d'abandon des édifices religieux chrétiens, qui connaissent le plus souvent déclin et ruine, alors que des restaurations et des embellissements peuvent être datés de la fin du VI^e siècle ou du début du VII^e.⁵⁵ Des habitats précaires en brique crue furent installés contre les murs du cirque abandonné, ou dans les ruines d'une riche maison du IV^e siècle. Une population nombreuse mais paupérisée semble s'être concentrée dans la ville,⁵⁶ formée peut-être de réfugiés fuyant les raids arabes et vivant dans des conditions misérables. À Carthage comme ailleurs, se multiplient les inhumations *intra muros*. Exceptionnelle avant les Byzantins, la pratique se développe ensuite sous la forme de sépultures autour des églises. À partir de la fin du VI^e siècle, cet usage se répand partout, sous la forme de cimetières ou de nombreux petits espaces funéraires dispersés.⁵⁷ Il

⁵¹ Guéry 1981.

⁵² Guéry/Morrisson/Slim 1982.

⁵³ Mahjoubi 1978.

⁵⁴ Fulford/Peacock 1984; Hurst/Roskams 1984.

⁵⁵ Ennabli 1997, 155.

⁵⁶ Ellis 1985, qui suppose un accroissement de la population.

⁵⁷ Stevens 1995; Leone 2002.

semble difficile de ne voir en ces pratiques qu'une simple mutation des usages ou des mentalités, et non un déclin de l'urbanisme au VII^e siècle.

Césarée de Maurétanie (Cherchel): Les recherches de Timothy POTTER révèlent un déclin précoce de cette ville maurétanienne, certes bien éloignée du cœur de l'Afrique byzantine. On constate une destruction des édifices publics (forum, basilique, église) dès les années 520-30. Au VII^e siècle, des constructions sommaires de pierre-remployée ou de bois furent bâties sur l'emplacement du forum, et un ou plusieurs villages séparés par des champs cultivés se substituèrent à l'agglomération urbaine antique.⁵⁸

Neapolis (Nabeul; Proconsulaire): Une étude récente⁵⁹ révèle des abandons de maisons dès l'époque vandale et un début du dépôt de terre sur les voies. Dans la deuxième moitié du VII^e siècle, l'espace habité prend un caractère rural qui s'accroît probablement durant les premiers temps de la conquête arabe, mais on continue à fabriquer des amphores (pour le vin?). Toutefois, Michel BONIFAY insiste sur la grande complexité des datations pour les périodes ultimes, sur la difficulté à passer d'une chronologie stratigraphique relative à une chronologie absolue, dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances céramologiques.⁶⁰ Toujours à propos de Nabeul, Ariane BOURGEOIS⁶¹ oppose une inventivité et un maintien de procédés assez savants dans la fabrication de la céramique sigillée claire D au VI^e siècle, au déclin du VII^e siècle, qui expliquerait une désaffection de la clientèle devant des plats et bols exclusivement lisses et d'une qualité technique devenue très médiocre.

Sufetula (Sbeitla; Byzacène): L'histoire urbaine est bien connue, depuis la fondation de la cité probablement sous Vespasien, grâce aux importants travaux de Noël DUVAL.⁶² La ville a connu son extension maximale au IV^e siècle.⁶³ Sufetula "a continué à vivre dans l'extension et la physionomie que lui avait données le Bas-Empire" à l'époque vandale et durant la haute époque byzantine, et d'importants monuments chrétiens furent élevés. Tout changea au VII^e siècle, peut-être à partir du pillage de la ville par les Arabes après leur victoire dans la plaine de Sbeitla en 647. On constate un remblayage et une oblitération de la voirie classique (alors que le réseau de rues régulières demeurait, malgré quelques transformations, à la première époque byzantine).⁶⁴ Les pavements des églises du groupe cathédral sont refaits à un niveau supérieur. Des quartiers entiers de la cité paraissent avoir été abandonnés, selon un processus également observé à Thuburbo Maius (Proconsulaire).⁶⁵ Un habitat appauvri demeura à l'époque arabe, jusqu'à l'invasion hilalienne du XI^e siècle, qui mit fin à la vie sédentaire dans ces régions.

⁵⁸ Potter 1995, 48-61.

⁵⁹ Slim/Bonifay/Piton 2002.

⁶⁰ Bonifay 2002, 182.

⁶¹ Bourgeois 2002, 195.

⁶² Les résultats essentiels de ces recherches sont rassemblés dans Duval 1982a.

⁶³ Ibid., 608-609.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 619.

⁶⁵ Maurin 1968, 238-254.

Ainsi, les exemples que nous avons retenus révèlent unanimement un processus de déclin accéléré des villes africaines au VII^e siècle, et déjà, semble-t-il, dans le dernier quart du VI^e siècle. Certes, tous les spécialistes soulignent les difficultés de datation des niveaux archéologiques à ce niveau très tardif; les recherches en cours sur la céramique sigillée africaine HAYES D, ainsi celles de M. BONIFAY, permettent d'espérer des progrès substantiels. Il semble cependant qu'il existe déjà un consensus pour constater, non un abandon, mais une paupérisation et une ruralisation de l'habitat. Le processus fut assurément accéléré par les raids arabes à partir de 647, mais il paraît avoir été fortement engagé antérieurement. Certes, la présence de trésors de pièces d'or frappées à cette époque, dont celui de Bararus (Rougga) est le plus célèbre,⁶⁶ incite à relativiser l'appauvrissement, de même que la frappe à Carthage et la circulation en Afrique de cette monnaie, comme le montrent les travaux de Cécile MORRISSON.⁶⁷ Ajoutons que la céramique africaine continua longtemps à être exportée dans le monde méditerranéen, de même que les amphores qui contenaient assurément de l'huile.⁶⁸ Le déclin ne fut donc ni simultané partout, ni général. Il semble pourtant indéniable, et il a touché aussi certaines zones rurales. De fait, le *survey* dirigé par Bruce HITCHNER dans la haute steppe de la région de Cillium (Kasserine) qui a révélé une exploitation intensive de l'olivier destinée à une exportation massive d'huile, culminant aux III^e et IV^e siècles, conclut à un retour de la région au nomadisme pastoral au VII^e siècle.⁶⁹

Il convient, ici, de ne pas isoler l'Afrique du reste du monde méditerranéen. Il est certain que, dès la dernière phase du long règne de Justinien, l'empire byzantin entra dans une période de crise extrêmement grave. L'impact de l'épidémie de peste bubonique, à partir de 542, et de ses graves récurrences cycliques, ne doit pas être négligé.⁷⁰ À partir de 568, les Lombards s'emparent progressivement de toute l'Italie. Dans les vingt dernières années du VI^e siècle, les Avars et les Slaves submergent les Balkans. Surtout, la guerre sans cesse reprise avec la Perse épuise l'Empire. À partir de 612, les Perses occupent la Syrie, la Cilicie, la Palestine, puis l'Égypte, alors même que les Avars assiègent (en vain) Constantinople en 626. Le succès d'Héraclius en 626/28 permit de récupérer le Levant, mais l'Empire exsangue ne pouvait que laisser à leur sort les provinces qui furent bientôt conquises par les Arabes musulmans. La crise ne fut donc nullement propre à l'Afrique. W. BRANDES a écrit récemment que, dans la seconde moitié du VII^e siècle, l'empire byzantin devint un monde très largement désurbanisé ("ein weitgehend de-urbanisiertes Land").⁷¹ Le déclin des villes n'est nullement propre à l'Afrique: on le constate aussi à la même époque dans l'Italie lombarde, dans les Balkans, en Anatolie.

⁶⁶ Guéry/Morrisson/Slim 1982.

⁶⁷ Ainsi Morrisson 1988.

⁶⁸ Amphores africaines très tardives à Marseille: Bonifay 1986, 297.

⁶⁹ Hitchner 1988; 1990.

⁷⁰ Dans son livre récent A. Laniado écrit (Laniado 2002, 62) qu'on a alors assisté à une catastrophe démographique, une "pénurie aiguë en personnes" qui explique à elle seule la concentration foncière constatée en Orient.

⁷¹ Brandes 1995.

Pourtant, W. LIEBESCHUETZ estime que, de toutes les villes romaines qui tombèrent au VII^e siècle sous la domination arabe, ce furent celles d'Afrique qui évoluèrent le plus mal. En fait, on connaît mal la période qui suivit la conquête arabe, assurément faute de critères céramologiques de datation, les premières poteries vernissées arabes dont la typologie est assurée n'étant pas antérieures au X^e siècle. Des traces d'occupation post-byzantine ont été trouvées à Haïdra, à Tébessa. Les fouilles de Sétif révèlent une continuité urbaine dans les premiers siècles de la période arabe: ce n'est qu'au XI^e siècle, lors de l'invasion des nomades orientaux, que la ville devint un simple village.⁷² D'autres travaux archéologiques révéleront sans nul doute d'autres exemples de continuité urbaine, ce que les fouilleurs du passé ont négligé, car ils avaient éliminé les modestes couches supérieures pour trouver vite la ville romaine, détruisant ainsi la mémoire de toute une tranche du passé.⁷³ Mais la langue latine et le christianisme connurent indubitablement une très rapide régression. Certes, les auteurs arabes médiévaux distinguent la catégorie des *Afarik*, les Africains, qui correspond aux Romano-Africains latinophones et chrétiens, distincts des *Roums*, c'est à dire des Byzantins, et distincts des Berbères, fidèles à leur langue et à leur système tribal. Des inscriptions latines chrétiennes sont connues, jusqu'au XI^e siècle à Kairouan. Mais tout cela est peu de chose, et le contraste est grand avec le maintien en Syrie, en Palestine, en Égypte, d'églises chrétiennes prospères, produisant une littérature théologique abondante, en grec, en syriaque, en copte, et plus tard en arabe, avec le maintien en Orient des traditions culturelles tardo-antiques qui a pu être constaté à l'époque omayyade. En Afrique, la grande tradition de saint Augustin disparaît, ainsi que beaucoup de villes, avant tout celles de l'intérieur, celles des hautes plaines.

D'une certaine manière, le malheur des peuples du passé fait le bonheur des archéologues; l'exemple le plus frappant est l'éruption du Vésuve en 79, fossilisant Pompéi et Herculaneum et permettant aux fouilleurs modernes de découvrir des villes romaines du I^{er} siècle quasiment intactes. On a souvent qualifié Timgad de Pompéi africaine, et cette image révèle bien la volonté des fouilleurs d'il y a un siècle (ainsi BALLU) de retrouver la ville du Haut-Empire sans trop se soucier de ce qu'elle devint à l'époque antique tardive. Il reste que la ville disparut, sans qu'aucun volcan ne l'ait ensevelie, et il en fut de même pour de très nombreuses cités africaines éloignées du bord de mer. Du coup, on peut constater une distorsion dans l'historiographie de l'Afrique antique: il est certain que les villes de la côte avaient, dans l'Antiquité, plus d'importance politique, économique, démographique que la plupart des villes de l'intérieur. Or ces dernières sont privilégiées dans l'historiographie, à cause de la richesse de la documentation archéologique et épigraphique qui y a été préservée et retrouvée, grâce au fait que les populations qui y ont résidé après la période antique tardive, habitant sous la tente ou dans des demeures de brique crue ou de torchis, ne remployaient pas les pierres antiques. La permanence urbaine sur la côte a suscité ce remploi, et elle a rendu impossible l'accès aux niveaux antiques enfouis sous les villes médiévales

⁷² E. Fentress, dans Mohamedi et al. 1991, 273-277.

⁷³ Ceci est fortement souligné par Février 1989, 71-75.

et modernes. C'est pourquoi nous connaissons Thamugadi (Timgad) ou Cuicul (Djemila), Thugga (Dougga) ou Sufetula (Sbeitla), bien mieux qu'Hadrumète qui devint Sousse, Icosium qui devint Alger ou Tingi qui devint Tanger. Si Lepcis Magna est bien connue, quoiqu'au bord de la mer, c'est que la vie urbaine y disparut tôt⁷⁴ (ce fut aussi le cas à Césarée – Cherchel – en Maurétanie).

On peut constater après les diverses étapes de la régression urbaine ce que j'appellerai un retour à l'état initial, soit la situation au temps des royaumes de Numidie et de leur annexion à l'Empire par César: la région des hautes plaines était le pays des Gétules, lesquels habitaient soit sous la tente, soit dans des habitats stables mais sommaires, ce qui contrastait avec l'urbanisation développée du nord, de la côte jusqu'à Cirta ou Sicca Veneria: c'est la situation que décrit Salluste dans sa Guerre de Jugurtha. La permanence urbaine se constate, à l'époque arabe médiévale et moderne, sur la côte, à Constantine, en Tunisie au Kef ou aussi dans le Sahel de Sousse (et à Tunis, succédant à Carthage), soit, en gros, la zone urbanisée avant le grand essor de l'époque antonine. Ainsi, l'urbanisation romaine des steppes de la Byzacène et des hautes plaines de la Numidie peut paraître une parenthèse dans une très longue histoire; parenthèse longue: pensons au bon demi millénaire durant lequel on peut suivre l'histoire de Timgad; mais qui reste limitée, comparée à l'histoire des villes du nord, dont l'existence est attestée depuis l'implantation phénicienne, ou au moins depuis l'urbanisation de l'époque du royaume numide, et jusqu'à nos jours.

Le contraste est immense entre la vitalité, la prospérité de l'Afrique et de ses villes au IV^e siècle et l'effondrement du VII^e siècle. S'il est légitime de parler de déclin entre ces deux extrêmes, on doit constater qu'il a été très lent, jusqu'à son accélération à partir du dernier quart du VI^e siècle. La régression finale est incontestable, avec la disparition de la vie urbaine dans des régions entières, revenues parfois au nomadisme pastoral, ou ailleurs à une agriculture de subsistance, ce qui implique un dépeuplement et un appauvrissement. Dire cela, remarque W. LIEBESCHUETZ, peut nous faire accuser aujourd'hui de retour au langage de l'historiographie coloniale: ce grief est formulé par les Anglais P. HORDEN et N. PURCELL dans leur livre récent *The Corrupting Sea*, sous prétexte que, dans un monde multiculturel, on doit respecter le genre de vie nomade.⁷⁵ Certes, mais LIEBESCHUETZ a tout à fait raison de dire⁷⁶ que c'est nier l'évidence que de ne pas parler ici de déclin économique, démographique, culturel, en attendant, cependant, les renaissances à venir des villes dans les états arabes musulmans médiévaux. Soulignons ici que le retour au nomadisme pastoral ne concerna au VII^e siècle que certaines zones. L'agriculture, et notamment l'oléiculture, se maintinrent en effet le plus souvent et gardèrent au pays une prospérité exaltée par les géographes arabes. Le retour à la steppe de très vastes territoires ne fut pas antérieur au XI^e siècle, qui vit l'invasion de tribus nomades arabes connue sous le nom d'invasion hilalienne, fatale à la vie sédentaire et à l'agriculture.

⁷⁴ Des trois cités de Tripolitaine, la moins connue est Oea, car la Tripoli médiévale et moderne a recouvert les ruines antiques, alors que l'absence de permanence urbaine a permis les fouilles de Sabratha et de Lepcis Magna.

⁷⁵ Horden/Purcell 2000, 74. Opinion critiquée par Liebeschuetz 2001b, 5.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Certes, les causes de ce qui a été plus un effondrement qu'un déclin restent obscures. Ruiné par les invasions, les épidémies, par les désastreuses guerres avec les Perses, l'empire byzantin était, de toute manière, incapable de résister à la conquête arabe, surtout dans la lointaine Afrique qui fut laissée sans véritable défense. Pour W. LIEBESCHUETZ, la cause la plus importante de la disparition des villes, du retour de campagnes cultivées à la steppe, de la disparition du christianisme et de la latinité, aurait été le regroupement de tribus berbères en vastes ensembles (ou principautés), ainsi que la poussée vers le nord de tribus venues des confins sahariens (et de la région syrtique). Ce furent les Berbères beaucoup plus que les Byzantins qui résistèrent aux armées arabes, avant de les rallier, de se convertir à l'Islam et de jouer un rôle essentiel dans la conquête du Maghreb occidental et de l'Espagne. Selon W. LIEBESCHUETZ, leur rôle croissant dans la région fut probablement plus dommageable à la vie urbaine (et ceci dès les guerres byzantino-maures du VI^e siècle) que la conquête par des armées venues d'Arabie et de Syrie.⁷⁷ C'est là une explication possible d'une mutation déconcertante, valable en tout cas pour certaines régions comme la Tripolitaine ou la Numidie, même si elle n'est certainement pas la seule.⁷⁸ À l'origine du processus se trouve assurément le fait que bien des populations du futur Maghreb, dans les steppes du Sud ou les montagnes maurétaniennes, étaient restées durant tous les longs siècles de l'histoire de l'Empire étrangères à la brillante civilisation urbaine romano-africaine.

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⁷⁷ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 377–378.

⁷⁸ Une objection pourrait être le fait que la disparition des villes se constate aussi à la même époque dans bien d'autres régions du monde méditerranéen, qui n'avaient aucun rapport avec le monde berbère.

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***Cadavera urbium*, nuove capitali e *Roma aeterna*: l'identità urbana in Italia fra crisi, rinascita e propaganda (secoli III-V)**

FEDERICO MARAZZI (Napoli)

Cento anni di negazione del tardoantico nell'archeologia italiana

Uno sguardo d'insieme sull'identità urbana dell'Italia tardoantica deve partire da una breve descrizione delle condizioni in cui si è potuta sviluppare, nell'Italia contemporanea, la conoscenza di questo tema. Anche se gli ultimi decenni hanno visto un indubbio progresso degli studi, lo stato dell'arte non è al momento paragonabile a quello di altre aree dell'antico Impero Romano, quali ad esempio l'Africa settentrionale o alcune regioni dell'Oriente. Ancora oggi si è lontani dal raggiungimento di una comprensione davvero soddisfacente delle morfologie del fenomeno urbano in età tardoantica. Questo stato di cose è particolarmente evidente sul fronte della ricerca archeologica, della quale mi occuperò in modo specifico in questa sede, sulla quale pesa sostanzialmente ancora oggi l'eredità di una definizione ottocentesca degli specialismi accademici e delle competenze istituzionali.

Dal punto di vista di quella che si può definire l'archeologia 'di stato', cioè quella gestita dalle Soprintendenze Archeologiche, l'interesse verso la *facies* tardoantica delle città italiane si è manifestato in modo episodico e contraddittorio.¹ E' infatti vero, in linea di principio, che la competenza delle Soprintendenze archeologiche giunge sino alla faticosa data del 476 d.C. E' però altrettanto vero che, nella prospettiva dello Stato liberale post-unitario e poi fascista, il contributo che l'archeologia fu chiamata a dare per il rafforzamento della debole identità nazionale e per la costruzione di uno Stato centralizzato, era quello della scoperta e della valorizzazione, in tutte le regioni della Penisola, delle tracce della comune matrice di una romanità trionfante e capace di produrre una concreta spinta organizzatrice del territorio, e ciò proprio grazie all'opera di capillare urbanizzazione, coordinata da Roma, tra la tarda repubblica e il medio impero: le città, insomma, come *effigies parvae simulacraque Romae*.² Quest'urbanizzazione è condotta sotto il segno della *concordia* tra comunità locali e potere centrale, in grado di diffondere benessere in un quadro di standard di decoro urbano ben riconoscibili attraverso la presenza di alcuni segni comuni: il razionale schema

¹ Per un esame generale dell'evoluzione delle politiche per la tutela dei beni archeologici nell'Italia post-unitaria, si vedano Manacorda 1982a e Barbanera 1998. Per le vicende riguardanti il ventennio fascista in particolare, Manacorda 1982b. Un contributo utile alla riflessione sul mancato esordio dell'archeologia postclassica in Italia nei decenni a cavallo fra XIX e XX secolo, si può trovare in La Rocca 1993a.

² Torelli 1990.

ortogonale degli assi viari cittadini; la posizione centrale, all'interno di questo schema, dello spazio forense, circondato dai principali edifici pubblici e religiosi; l'immane corredo degli edifici e degli spazi per il pubblico divertimento e benessere, e cioè teatri, anfiteatri, terme e ginnasi; un'agevole tipizzazione dell'edilizia privata, articolata, pur tra molteplici varianti, nelle due polarità principali della *domus* borghese e patrizia e dell'*insula* popolare; una rigida separazione tra gli spazi dei vivi e gli spazi dei morti.

Tale tradizione di impegno di ricerca e tutela trovava estrema difficoltà nell'orientarsi in questi stessi scenari urbani, quando si trattasse di confrontarsi con le dinamiche che in essi si producono nei secoli successivi alla crisi di quelle borghesie, che si verifica nel corso del III secolo. Da una siffatta prospettiva, dopo la rottura degli equilibri che avevano costituito la città classica, la successiva ricomposizione del quadro urbano nel contesto delle mutate condizioni politico-istituzionali del periodo tardoantico, viene sostanzialmente misurata in termini di "percentuali di decadenza" – o, se si preferisce, di "sopravvivenza" – del modello di città concepito e consolidato anteriormente al III secolo d.C., e non in quanto espressione di un'idea di città diversa, appropriata ad una fase storica con bisogni e riferimenti culturali suoi peculiari.

In virtù di questa impostazione, in Italia, per decenni, le tracce archeologiche di occupazione postclassica delle città, che non concordassero con lo schema urbano ideale che ho tracciato poco fa, sono state purtroppo frequentemente oggetto, in vista della presentazione finale al pubblico di un sito archeologico, di fisica eliminazione, quasi sempre neppure accompagnata da un livello minimamente accettabile di documentazione. Quasi che i processi mutazionali che intaccano l'assetto e il quadro di leggibilità della città classica fossero delle vergogne da non mostrare in pubblico e, in definitiva, nemmeno da ricordare. Basti pensare, a questo proposito, alla politica di sistematico smantellamento dei resti post-classici che ha presieduto alla valorizzazione archeologica del Foro Romano o delle zone dei Fori Boario e Olitorio a Roma, fra l'ultimo trentennio del XIX secolo e gli anni '60/70 del XX secolo; o, fuori, di Roma, per citare solo alcuni, macroscopici esempi, a quanto sia andato distrutto, nello stesso periodo, delle *facies* tardoantiche di siti urbani antichi divenuti nel corso del XX secolo grandi aree archeologiche aperte al pubblico, come Ostia, Aquileia, Paestum, Selinunte, Tharros.

La politica seguita dalle Soprintendenze non ha trovato alcun significativo riequilibrio in ambito strettamente accademico. L'archeologia e la topografia classica insegnate nelle università, hanno pienamente incoraggiato la visione prima descritta e, ancor oggi, i principali manuali disponibili per la formazione degli studenti dedicano uno spazio residuale alla trattazione dell'architettura tardoantica e nessuno alla trattazione della 'forma urbana' successivamente all'epoca medio-imperiale.

D'altra parte, l'unica disciplina accademica di tipo archeologico che in Italia abbia tradizionalmente avuto l'età tardoantica al centro dei propri interessi è, come è noto, l'archeologia cristiana. Essa però, come dice la sua stessa denominazione, si occupa essenzialmente di monumenti e contesti relativi al culto cristiano.³ Questo tipo d'interesse, peraltro coltivato prevalentemente in una

prospettiva di tipo storico-artistico e storico-religioso, spesso influenzata anche da presupposti ideologici assai marcati, ha inevitabilmente delimitato e condizionato in modo decisivo la possibilità di una percezione a tutto tondo dello spazio e delle funzionalità dell'ambiente urbano tardoantico. Nella visione di questa disciplina, almeno per come essa si è sviluppata nella tradizione italiana durante buona parte del XX secolo, i monumenti cristiani finiscono per collocarsi in uno 'spazio indefinito', che viene inevitabilmente fagocitato dalla loro preminente visibilità. Tale condizione è acuita anche dal fatto che essi, al contrario dell'ambiente che originariamente li circondava, sono talora riusciti a giungere materialmente leggibili sino a noi, attraverso i secoli.

Lo stesso, tardivo, sviluppo in Italia di un'autonoma disciplina archeologica medievistica, tra gli anni '70 e gli anni '80 del XX secolo, non ha all'inizio particolarmente influito sul progresso degli studi sulla città tardoantica. Ciò è avvenuto poiché l'archeologia medievale nasce in Italia, come è stato ben sintetizzato da Paolo DELOGU, prevalentemente dall'impulso di due esperienze, sviluppatesi indipendentemente l'una dall'altra:⁴ da un lato quella della cosiddetta 'archeologia barbarica', legata soprattutto al mondo delle costumanze funerarie dei popoli invasori; dall'altro lato, quella dello studio della cultura materiale e degli insediamenti rurali bassomedievali, generata dagli studi di storia agraria, del popolamento e della cultura materiale.

In conseguenza di questa consolidata eredità degli indirizzi accademici e delle politiche di valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale, in Italia si è faticato ad uscire dall'uso di due parametri interpretativi che definiscono la città in età tardoantica come un ambiente che non ha 'di per sé' un'identità, ma che è epigono o prodromo di altre identità. Per essere più chiari, i secoli del tardoantico si sono prevalentemente valutati, a scelta, come quelli in cui "muore" la città pagana o in cui "nasce" la città cristiana. E' chiaro che questo, concettualmente parlando, costituisce un vero e proprio *cul de sac*, che non è servito a cogliere la pluralità di apporti culturali, politici, economici e sociali entro i quali si ricompongono l'immagine e la funzione della città nell'orizzonte peculiare del tardo impero romano.

Città che si scoprono "ricche di decadenza"

Negli ultimi venti anni la mole di dati, soprattutto archeologici, a disposizione per diversi centri urbani italiani riguardanti il periodo tardoantico è però aumentata in maniera significativa. Ciò tuttavia non è avvenuto solo in seguito alla maturazione di un interesse specificamente orientato verso la conoscenza di questa fase

³ Secondo la definizione posta in apertura del più importante manuale di archeologia cristiana attualmente in uso in Italia - quello di Pasquale Testini - "L'archeologia cristiana è una scienza storica, che ha per compito lo studio delle testimonianze monumentali dei primi secoli dell'antichità cristiana, la cui esegesi dev'essere fatta con il sussidio storico-religioso comparato e della teologia positiva" (Testini 1980, 1).

⁴ Delogu 1989. Una breve, ma efficace panoramica è anche quella che si trova in Francovich 1987.

storica delle città della Penisola. Piuttosto, questa crescita va considerata come un portato indiretto di una trasformazione più generale degli obiettivi e della metodologia della ricerca archeologica.⁵ Essa infatti si colloca, durante gli anni '80, nell'ambito del lancio dei primi grandi progetti di archeologia urbana aventi per obiettivo, grazie all'ormai diffusa applicazione delle metodologie di scavo stratigrafico, quello di ottenere una conoscenza diacronica di tutte le fasi di vita rilevabili all'interno di un determinato sito. Esperienze-pilota in questo senso, sono state quelle maturate nel complesso della *Crypta Balbi* a Roma;⁶ negli scavi urbani di Pavia⁷ e Verona;⁸ nei siti di Santa Patrizia e di Carminiello ai Mannesi a Napoli;⁹ negli scavi del complesso monastico di Santa Giulia ed in altri siti urbani a Brescia;¹⁰ nei sondaggi per le stazioni della terza linea della metropolitana di Milano¹¹ ed infine con gli scavi del centro storico di Otranto.¹² Dopo di esse, nel corso degli anni '90 e sino ad oggi, le opportunità di conoscenza di contesti archeologici urbani databili al periodo tardoantico, in grado di produrre informazioni su realtà e funzioni molto diversificate tra loro si sono ulteriormente accresciute e, per la prima volta, non si sono limitate agli ambiti degli edifici di culto cristiano.

D'altra parte, in un intervento al primo Congresso nazionale di archeologia medievale, nel 1997, Philippe PERGOLA, oggi Rettore del Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, affermava programmaticamente che, in una "archeologia cristiana per il 2000", la sfera religiosa non potesse più essere letta a prescindere "dal più vasto contesto della storia e dall'archeologia globali della tarda antichità", con ciò fornendo un importante contributo alla presa d'atto dell'esigenza di un'archeologia tardoantica,¹³ nonostante, a livello accademico, l'insegnamento di questa materia non sia, ancora oggi, diffuso in modo significativo.

Tuttavia, proprio perché un approccio più consapevole alla realtà materiale delle fasi tardoantiche delle città italiane è non solo un fatto ancora abbastanza recente, ma è per di più connesso all'impegnativa lettura di sequenze pluristratificate, va detto, con molta onestà, che trarre delle sintesi che valgano a livello

⁵ Inquadramento generale del problema alla metà degli anni '80 in Ward-Perkins 1987, e, alla fine degli anni '90 in Brogiolo/Gelichi 1998, 27-44. Un tentativo recente di messa a punto dei temi-guida sulla lettura della trasformazione del fenomeno urbano in Italia nella transizione fra antichità e medioevo, alla luce degli studi condotti in ambito archeologico negli ultimi quattro decenni, si trova in La Rocca 2003. La sintesi dei risultati degli scavi si trova in Manacorda 2001. Sull'insieme degli interventi di archeologia urbana a Roma riferibili a fasi tardoantiche e altomedievali si vedano le opere generali Aurea Roma 2000 e Roma 2001.

⁶ Il "manifesto programmatico" su obiettivi e metodo del progetto di indagine del complesso della *Crypta Balbi* si trova in Manacorda 1982c.

⁷ Hudson 1981 e 1987.

⁸ La Rocca 1986.

⁹ I risultati di Carminiello ai Mannesi in Arthur 1994; per Santa Patrizia (non integralmente pubblicato) riferimenti preliminari in Arthur 1984. L'insieme dei dati su Napoli tardoantica e bizantina, presentati e discussi dallo studioso britannico, confluiscono in Arthur 2002.

¹⁰ Brogiolo 1993.

¹¹ Caporosso 1991.

¹² Michaelides/Wilkinson 1992.

¹³ Pergola 1997.

nazionale è impresa da compiere con estrema cautela e con la consapevolezza dell'assoluta provvisorietà di qualsiasi conclusione che si decida di proporre.

L'Italia dalle troppe città

Conclusa questa necessaria premessa, cercherò ora di proporre uno sguardo di sintesi sui dati a disposizione sulla morfologia di alcune città italiane in età tardoantica, tentando da ciò di estrapolare possibili linee generali di lettura del fenomeno urbano.

La realtà di un'Italia intensamente ed uniformemente urbanizzata – se mai essa si sia compiutamente definita – inizia, probabilmente, a mostrare segni di regresso già prima della cosiddetta crisi del III secolo e delle trasformazioni politico-istituzionali compiutesi tra i regni di Diocleziano e Costantino.

Già nel II secolo avanzato, infatti, in alcune aree dell'Italia centrale, dove sono disponibili analisi integrate di dati archeologici e testimonianze epigrafiche, quali l'Agro Veientano e l'Agro Falisco,¹⁴ la Toscana meridionale marittima,¹⁵ la Sabina e l'Abruzzo interno,¹⁶ molti centri urbani di fondazione tardo-repubblicana o perfino proto-imperiale non sembrano in grado di funzionare, nel territorio, come attrattori demici predominanti, a tutto vantaggio di un insediamento sparso o al più riunito in agglomerati di piccole dimensioni. Le ragioni di queste precoci evoluzioni possono essere molte e non sono tutte chiare. Nell'Etruria Meridionale, nella Toscana Meridionale e nella Sabina Tiberina, un'ipotesi più plausibile di altre per spiegare questo fenomeno sembra essere che la prevalente vocazione agraria a servizio del mercato romano e la relativa vicinanza di Roma di queste aree possa aver inibito la crescita di un forte spirito d'iniziativa civica locale. Nella Sabina interna e nell'Abruzzo sembra che la relativa debolezza dei centri urbani (forse con l'eccezione di Sulmona) sia da attribuire alla sostanziale estraneità del modello urbano alla cultura di queste zone di montagna, a prevalente economia silvo-pastorale, accoppiata alla mancata formazione di un ceto di proprietari agrari di consistenza sufficiente, non tanto patrimoniale quanto numerica, da poter sostenere e assicurare il funzionamento delle istituzioni municipali.

In queste regioni, all'età tardoantica vengono consegnate, dall'epoca precedente, delle città che forse mantengono un ruolo di centri di servizio coordinamento amministrativo del territorio, ma che sembrano assai poco consistenti demograficamente parlando. Il fatto che alcune di esse possano risultare, in epoca tarda, sedi di cattedre vescovili¹⁷ non contraddice questo quadro d'insieme, poiché la debolezza del nucleo urbano non significa assolutamente che il territorio non avesse invece una sua densità abitativa.

¹⁴ Potter 1979; il problema viene ripreso, in relazione allo scavo del sito di Mola di Monte Gelato, in Potter/King 1997. Vedi anche Marazzi 2001a; R. Volpe 2001 e Suburbium 2003.

¹⁵ Gelichi 1999; Carandini/Cambi 2002.

¹⁶ Staffa 1993; Migliario 1995.

¹⁷ Per un censimento delle sedi vescovili tardoantiche in Italia, e del posizionamento delle loro cattedrali si veda Testini/Cantino Wataghin/Pani Ermini 1989.

Il quadro che emerge dallo studio di questi territori-campione dell'Italia centrale può forse trovare ulteriori confronti in altre aree della Penisola. Per esempio, sembra di cogliere un analogo percorso evolutivo nel Piemonte Occidentale¹⁸ e nelle aree della Sicilia centrale.¹⁹ Anche qui, il percorso che determina la diminuzione numerica dei centri urbani sembra da riferire a cause diverse. In Piemonte appare prevalere la marginalizzazione complessiva di un territorio estraneo ai maggiori assi di comunicazione. In Sicilia, invece, la formazione di grandi concentrazioni patrimoniali legate agli interessi di gruppi familiari romani, o comunque i cui orizzonti politico-economici andavano ben al di là delle realtà municipali, soffocano le ragioni d'essere di queste ultime; sembrano sfuggire a questo processo di svuotamento funzionale solo i centri costieri, che sono funzionali sia ad assicurare le attività amministrative di base della provincia, sia lo smercio dei prodotti agrari dell'entroterra. La situazione della Puglia settentrionale²⁰ non sembra differire molto nei presupposti e negli esiti da quella siciliana: anche qui, oltre la metà dei trentotto centri citati da Plinio come comunità municipali giunge all'età tardoantica già declassata, come potrebbe indicare il fatto che in essi non viene mai creata una diocesi cristiana. I centri che regrediscono sono principalmente quelli dell'entroterra. La vocazione agraria della regione e la formazione in età imperiale, anche qui – soprattutto nella parte settentrionale – di grandi blocchi patrimoniali, conduce all'assottigliamento di "un sistema municipale" che – per usare le parole di Giulio VOLPE – "appare denso e per più aspetti esagerato, non rispondente alle reali possibilità politiche, finanziarie e gestionali locali".²¹

E' da credere che quelli appena elencati non siano i soli contesti italiani nei quali sia osservabile, nella consistenza e nella distribuzione della rete degli insediamenti urbani una dinamica del tipo appena descritto, che è una dinamica profonda e di lungo periodo, determinata probabilmente anche dalla progressiva ridefinizione del ruolo e del peso economico e politico della Penisola nel quadro generale dell'Impero.

In sostanza, la fase della grande crisi del III secolo vedrebbe solo il compimento di un processo che ha radici più profonde nell'esigenza del riequilibrio di un network urbano, quale quello italiano, sovradimensionato rispetto alle effettive possibilità o vocazioni delle diverse regioni della Penisola, in ragione della particolarissima condizione di assoluto predominio che essa aveva raggiunto, fra tarda Repubblica e primo Impero, nello scenario globale del sistema imperiale.²²

Ciò che invece di più originale sembra aver prodotto, sull'identità urbana, la profonda trasformazione politico-istituzionale conosciuta dall'Italia – come e forse di più che dal resto dell'Impero – durante la fase finale III secolo, è la definizione di una nuova gerarchia dei centri urbani in rapporto alle mutate funzioni da essi rivestite sul piano sia militare sia amministrativo.

¹⁸ La Rocca 1992; Filippi /Zanda 1994.

¹⁹ Cracco Ruggini 1982/83, 500-515; Wilson 1990, 330-337; Molinari 1997, 23-25.

²⁰ G. Volpe 1996, 85-91.

²¹ G. Volpe 1996, 86.

²² Carandini 1993; Panella 1993.

La ridefinizione di un ruolo e, potremmo dire, di un *habitus* militare per le città italiane investe in questo periodo soprattutto la parte settentrionale della Penisola, e muove dalla circostanza del suo coinvolgimento nelle scorrerie barbariche degli anni 260-70. Sotto Massimino il Trace si ricostruirono le mura di Aquileia;²³ nel periodo di tempo che corre tra il regno di Gallieno e la Tetrarchia furono edificate prima la cinta muraria di Verona²⁴ e poi vennero ricostruite o ampliate quelle di Milano,²⁵ Piacenza²⁶ e Como,²⁷ forse Pavia²⁸ e Rimini.²⁹ Fra III e IV secolo, infine, si ricostruì la cinta muraria di Trieste.³⁰ Ad eccezione del recinto di Aureliano a Roma³¹, non risulta invece che alcuna città del centro-sud abbia ricevuto in questo periodo interventi di ricostruzione o restauro delle proprie difese.

Lasciando da parte per ora il caso di Roma, è interessante notare come in nessuno degli esempi, attestati in Italia settentrionale, di ricostruzione di mura durante l'ultimo quarto del III secolo si registri una riduzione della superficie urbana protetta dalle precedenti mura di età tardorepubblicana o augustea. Anzi, nei casi di Milano e Aquileia si verifica tutto il contrario, vale dire un ampliamento significativo dell'area urbana racchiusa dalla cinta muraria pre-esistente.³² Questo significa, molto banalmente, che il fenomeno del regresso dell'urbanizzazione, che abbiamo ricordato poco fa, è sicuramente di tipo selettivo e non generalizzato. In altre parole, accanto a città che, fra II e III secolo, hanno visto ridursi il loro ruolo all'interno del territorio, altre lo hanno evidentemente potenziato. Nella specifica temperie del tardo III secolo, quindi, la costruzione delle mura può essere letta come l'indizio di un'accresciuta rilevanza di un centro urbano e non di una sua crisi.

A questa considerazione ne segue immediatamente un'altra, di duplice natura: quali sono in questa fase le città importanti e per che cosa si caratterizzano? La domanda trova oggi alcune possibili risposte, grazie agli studi condotti sulla natura e la finalità delle trasformazioni politico-amministrative della tetrarchia e ai loro riflessi negativi sull'autonomia amministrativa delle città, anche se, come sottolinea Giovanni Cecconi nel contributo presentato per questo convegno, tali riflessi devono essere ancora attentamente valutati nella loro effettiva portata.

²³ Bertacchi 1980, 109-117. Dubbi sull'attendibilità di questa datazione e sulla possibile posticipazione dell'erezione delle mura al IV secolo avanzato, in Cantino Wataghin 1996, 248, sulla scorta degli studi di Forlati Tamaro 1975 e Buora 1988; medesima opinione è ritenuta da Jäggi 1990, 160-163. Rebecchi 1993, 203, propone una terza ipotesi di datazione della ricostruzione delle mura tardoantiche all'età tetrarchica.

²⁴ Cavalieri Manasse 1993.

²⁵ Ceresa Mori 1990; Arslan/Caporusso 1991, 355.

²⁶ Marini Calvani 1992, 325-326. Nello stesso contributo, l'Autrice mostra estrema prudenza nel proporre una datazione precisa per le fortificazioni di altre città emiliane, quali Fidenza, Reggio e Parma.

²⁷ De Angelis D'Ossat 1990.

²⁸ Hudson 1990.

²⁹ Rebecchi 1993, 213.

³⁰ Rebecchi 1993, 206.

³¹ Mancini 2001, 21-25.

³² Considerazioni generali non dissimili esprime, sulla esclusiva scorta delle evidenze archeologiche e limitatamente al territorio dell'Italia padana, Cantino Wataghin 1996.

Il dato di fatto è però che, dal punto di vista delle testimonianze materiali, in base ai dati oggi disponibili, la coincidenza è evidente fra l'elevazione di alcuni centri a ruoli rilevanti di tipo politico-amministrativo fra ultimo quarto del III secolo e l'età costantiniana, e un loro visibile dinamismo urbanistico. Oltre ai casi più eclatanti, rappresentati da Milano e Aquileia, sui quali tornerò più avanti, altri iniziano a profilarsi: ad esempio Canosa, metropoli dell'*Apulia*, e Capua, metropoli della *Campania*.

Due capitali provinciali: Capua e Canusium

Secondo i dati presentati nel 1998 da Stefano DE CARO, sulla base delle ricerche in corso da parte della Soprintendenza Archeologica di Napoli, il quadro della Capua del IV secolo [fig. 1] è quello di una città che, 'ribattezzata' da Diocleziano

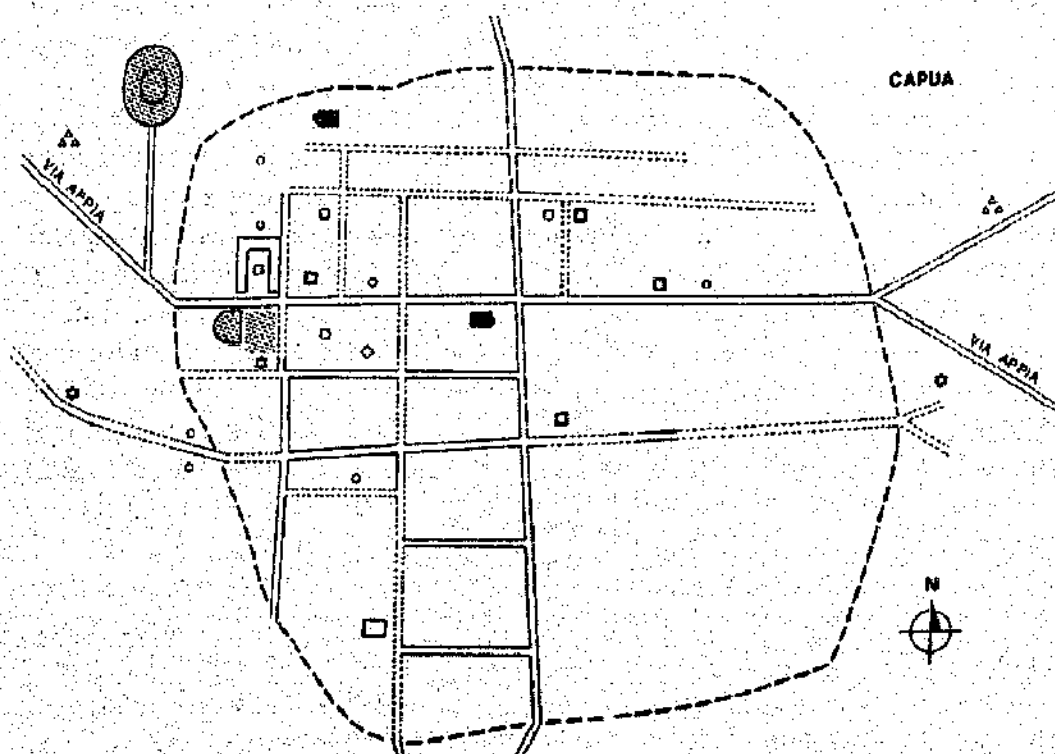


fig. 1: Planimetria di Capua tardoantica (da Testini/Cantino Wataghin/Pani Ermini).

con il proprio nome e promossa al rango di sede del *corrector Campaniae*, conosce un indubbio rilancio politico.³³ In questo stesso periodo vengono ricordati lavori di restauro alla pavimentazione della via Appia. Riflesso di questo rilancio sarebbe stata la positiva ricaduta sul piano della floridezza economica, che, nei secoli del medio impero aveva risentito dello slancio espansivo del porto di Puteoli, se è da prendere per buona l'opinione di Ausonio³⁴ che, verso il 380, la

³³ De Caro 1999. Arricchisce il quadro la recente sintesi di Pagano 2003.

³⁴ Auson. ordo 46-63.

colloca tra le città più importanti dell'Impero per bellezza e ricchezza, anche in relazione alla fertilità del territorio. Può collegarsi a quest'accento la serie di informazioni, estese cronologicamente fra i regni di Costantino e Graziano, dei contributi che la città doveva ricevere in *frumentationes* per aiutarla, a sua volta, a soddisfare gli invii di *caro porcina* e di calce a Roma.³⁵

Scavi condotti negli anni '80 all'interno di un'isolato del centro storico³⁶ hanno restituito una ricca serie ceramica in cui, accanto alla presenza di cospicue importazioni di Terra Sigillata Chiara africana, è riscontrabile la testimonianza di una vivissima produzione locale di vasellame da mensa, intenta ad imitare le forme della ceramica da mensa importata. Si riscontrano, inoltre, almeno tre testimonianze capuane tra IV secolo e primissimi anni del V, relative all'erezione di altrettante statue, due in onore di un *consularis Campaniae* e una di un *curator rei publicae*, per celebrare la loro attività come restauratori di purtroppo non meglio precisate opere pubbliche. Sappiamo inoltre che, nella seconda metà del IV secolo Simmaco acquistò una *domus* nella città, ed è logico ipotizzare, come hanno ben delineato gli studi di Domenico VERA,³⁷ che la presenza di interessi aristocratici in città non dovette limitarsi al celebre *praefectus urbi* del 384.

In base alle testimonianze della *vita Sylvestri* del *Liber Pontificalis* si è a conoscenza di un precoce impianto monumentale cristiano, con la costruzione della cattedrale. Questo complesso costantiniano non è ancora stato attestato archeologicamente con assoluta sicurezza, ma la basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, datata tra la fine del IV e la prima metà del V secolo, a cinque navate, è divenuta successivamente cattedrale della città, testimonia dell'ambizione e delle potenzialità economiche della chiesa capuana in età tardoantica. Accanto a ciò, come rileva DE CARO, per tutto il IV secolo sono attestate persistenze tutt'altro che marginali di culti pagani in città (con la ristrutturazione del mitreo) e negli immediati dintorni (nel santuario di Diana Tifatina), insieme alla testimonianza epigrafica del cosiddetto *feriale campanum*, redatto nel 387, che è una lista di feste pagane evidentemente ancora praticate.

L'unico altro caso di città capoluogo provinciale dell'Italia meridionale di cui si possa dire qualcosa per il medesimo periodo è rappresentato da Canosa di Puglia, l'antica Canusium [fig. 2]. Il rilancio della città avviene in un momento posteriore rispetto alla cronologia capuana, e si colloca piuttosto nella parte finale del regno di Costantino, quando essa viene eletta definitivamente a sede del governo provinciale dell'*Apulia*.³⁸ Gli eventi attraverso cui, a partire da questo periodo, si manifesta il rilancio della città, presentano caratteristiche assai affini a

³⁵ Cracco Ruggini 1969.

³⁶ Arthur 1987.

³⁷ Vera 1986.

³⁸ Grelle 1993, 165-190; G. Volpe 1996, 95-107; Campione/Nuzzo 1999, 27-52. Il dossier epigrafico di Canosa tardoantica e il suo significato per la lettura del rapporto tra istituzioni municipali e presenza degli uffici governatoriali della provincia è dettagliatamente esaminato in Christol/Magioncalda 1996. Sulla funzione di Canosa come centro di coordinamento della leva fiscale della provincia, si veda Giardina/Grelle 1983. Sulle ultime scoperte e le conseguenti riflessioni di sintesi sulla struttura urbana di Canosa tardoantica, si veda G. Volpe (in corso di stampa). Ringrazio Giulio Volpe per avermi messo a disposizione il suo ultimo contributo sull'argomento, ancora inedito.

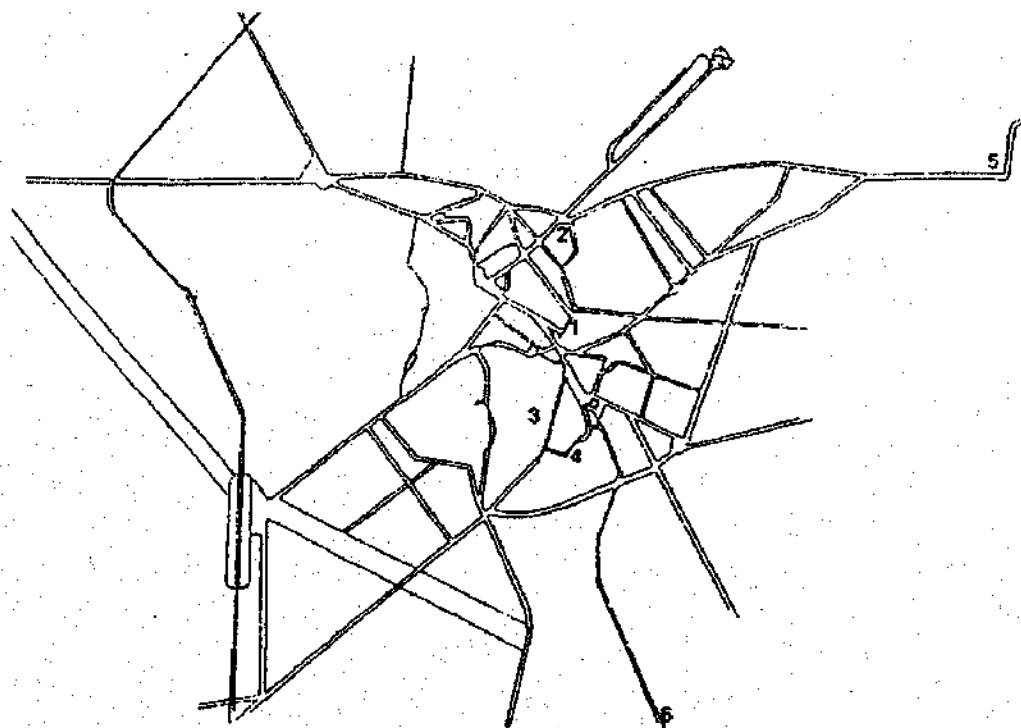


fig. 2: Planimetria di Canosa tardoantica. 1. Cattedrale romanica; 2. Battistero di San Giovanni; 3. Area del tempio di Giove Toro; 4. San Pietro; 5. Santa Sofia; 6. San Leucio (da Felle-Nuzzo 1993).

quelli riscontrati per Capua. Dopo un silenzio che interessa tutto il periodo compreso tra la tarda età antonina e la sua promozione a capoluogo, il IV secolo costituisce una fase per la quale, su Canosa, disponiamo di un certo numero di notizie interessanti. Sono attestate anche qui diverse statue erette in onore di funzionari imperiali responsabili di interventi di abbellimento della città. Particolarmente rilevante è quella relativa al primo *consularis* noto, Cassius Ruferius, del quale si dice che, *qua dispositione civitatem ex omni parte renobabit*. Non abbiamo idea precisa delle opere patrocinate da Ruferius, ma si può dire con certezza che esse s'integrassero in un quadro di dinamismo urbano diffuso, dato che ben tre impianti termali furono ricostruiti nel corso del IV secolo. Sicuramente, un concreto intervento statale ad incremento del ruolo rivestito dalla città può essere visto nel potenziamento, al suo interno, di uno dei *gynecaea* pubblici per la fabbricazione dei panni di lana, attestato all'inizio del V secolo. A sostenere il fervore di rinnovo urbano dovette probabilmente contribuire, nella seconda metà del IV secolo, anche il *fil rouge* esistente fra due delle più potenti casate senatorie della Roma di allora, quella dei Nicomachi, originari proprio di Canosa, e quella dei Simmachi, imparentati ai primi, con il notabilato locale. Quest'ultimo, si esprime ancora collettivamente, nel IV secolo, come *ordo* o *res publica*, anche se sembra preminente la complementarietà del suo agire con gli indirizzi politico-operativi dei rappresentanti ufficiali *in loco* del potere centrale e degli aristocratici locali accreditati presso di esso in virtù del loro rango senatorio, come gli

appena ricordati esponenti delle casate dei Simmachi e dei Nicomachi. Il probabile influsso di questi ultimi, con i loro precipui orientamenti politico-religiosi, sulla vita canosina può essere riscontrato anche nella apparente vitalità, sino alla fine del IV secolo, del complesso culturale pagano di Giove Toro. Sempre nel corso del IV secolo, sembra invece abbastanza contenuto l'exploit monumentale cristiano all'interno dell'ambito urbano, limitato alla costruzione della cattedrale, durante la prima metà del IV secolo, ad opera del vescovo Stercorio.

Gli studi di Giulio VOLPE sulla Daunia tardoantica hanno mostrato con chiarezza che, allo slancio urbano del IV secolo, si accompagna anche un significativo contemporaneo addensamento dell'insediamento nel territorio, che si trasforma in un vero e proprio *suburbium* della città, punteggiato da fattorie e da residenze di piccole dimensioni, votate soprattutto a soddisfare esigenze di carattere produttivo, evidentemente in relazione agli stimoli prodotti dal mercato cittadino. Negli immediati dintorni della città sembrano invece assenti le grandi *villae*, tipiche di questo periodo, che si collocano in posizione più distante.³⁹ Se non è troppo rischioso addentrarsi sul terreno dell'interpretazione, di fronte a dati così frammentari, è legittimo supporre che i grandi *possessores*, o più in generale i notabili, preferissero risiedere comunque in città, quando quest'ultima ricoprisse un ruolo politicamente rilevante e non scegliere necessariamente il *buen retiro* agreste.

Sebbene queste informazioni, ancora così frammentarie, sfortunatamente non riescano a produrre un'immagine della 'forma urbana' di Capua e di Canosa nella prima età tardoantica – cioè tra fine III e IV secolo –, tuttavia sono sufficienti per innescare qualche riflessione su alcune caratteristiche di una città capoluogo di provincia di questo periodo. Innanzitutto, il rilancio dello status di queste città, che avviene alla fine del III secolo per Capua e nel secondo venticinquennio del IV a Canosa, è chiaramente 'pilotato' dal governo centrale. Ciò è testimoniato, oltre che dal ruolo ad esse conferito, anche dall'attestazione di interventi di mantenimento del *decus* della città affidati a magistrati di nomina imperiale, resi evidentemente possibili dal fatto che questi centri costituiscono gli snodi vitali della leva fiscale di tutta la provincia. In questi contesti, come è dimostrato per Canosa, non mancano anche contributi della collettività, ma, come dicevo prima, essi sembrano indice più di sforzi di gruppi di notabili desiderosi di guadagnare visibilità al cospetto del potere, che non azioni condotte dai rappresentanti della comunità interessati a coltivare i meccanismi del consenso sulla scena politica urbana.

Il dato della tipologia dell'insediamento rurale prossimo a Canosa, insieme al dato capuano della scelta, da parte di Simmaco, di acquistare una *domus* in città, danno l'impressione di che la dimensione dell'*urbanitas* mantenga tutta la sua attrattiva per i ceti dominanti, se resta collegata ad un quadro gratificante sul piano politico. I casi di Capua e Canosa rivelano anche che i centri capoluogo delle province costituiscono snodi importanti di collegamento fra gli interessi di grande casate senatorie, ormai nel IV secolo basate a Roma, e l'orizzonte produttivo locale.

³⁹ G. Volpe 1996, 204 sgg.

La *facies* cultural-religiosa di questi centri, durante il IV secolo, appare ancora piuttosto diversificata, e di essa l'elemento cristiano – certamente in crescita – costituisce solo una delle componenti. Ma si tratta di una presenza che, dal punto di vista topografico, sembra materializzarsi ancora quasi esclusivamente con l'impianto della sola cattedrale.

L'impressione complessiva che si ricava dai dati esaminati è quella, insomma, di una indubbia complessità sociale e culturale. Ma la prosperità che consente queste condizioni è proporzionata all'interesse che questi centri rivestono nella strategia generale di governo del territorio. Una riprova di questo potrebbe essere trovata, sempre mantenendoci in *Apulia*, nel caso speculare di Venosa che, rimpiazzata da Canosa come capoluogo di provincia, non conosce più sostanziosi interventi di cura pubblica dei propri monumenti e, stando ai più recenti dati archeologici, testimonia, già nella seconda metà del IV secolo, evidenti fenomeni di regresso del tenore organizzativo dello spazio urbano, quale un'occupazione funeraria non pianificata di edifici in abbandono e spazi aperti.⁴⁰ Il caso dei due capoluoghi meridionali – la cui conoscenza è peraltro ancora lontana dall'essere soddisfacente – pone in rilievo alcuni aspetti della realtà urbana nel IV secolo, che necessitano di prendere in considerazione ulteriori confronti.

I due occhi dell'Impero: Aquileia e Milano

Aquileia [fig. 3], da sempre centro urbano di cruciale importanza dell'Italia settentrionale romanizzata, è tra le prime città a ricevere un significativo riassetto urbanistico in età tardoantica, pur con i dubbi connessi alla ricostruzione ed ampliamento delle mura, che taluni autori attribuiscono alla fine degli anni '30 del III secolo.⁴¹ Questo processo di rinnovamento viene accelerato dalla promozione della città a capoluogo della provincia di *Venetia et Histria* nel corso della riforma diocleziana. Durante il IV secolo, è regolarmente residenza del governatore e, sino al regno di Teodosio, è sede di frequenti soggiorni degli imperatori. E' snodo commerciale cruciale per il rifornimento da mare delle armate attive sul fronte danubiano.

La sua attuale condizione di grande parco archeologico consente di disporre di dati una quantità e una qualità certamente superiori a quelli dei due capoluoghi meridionali. Nell'ambito della cerchia muraria del III secolo, la città tardoantica prospera, e, fra tardo III e prima metà IV secolo è attestata la costruzione delle grandi terme, del circo, della zecca, dei grandi *horrea* siti nell'area sud-orientale e di un mercato adiacente ad essi. Va rilevata la volontà nel IV secolo di restaurare, conservare e valorizzare il foro quale luogo ideologico, sede delle memorie civiche. Esempi di ciò si ravvisano nella sistemazione di un'antica iscrizione votiva (dedica a Venere Celeste) in un punto disestato della platea e nella collocazione di statue da parte di Septimius Theodolus, governatore della *Venetia et Histria* poco prima del 361 d.C.⁴²

⁴⁰ G. Volpe 1996, 109; Marchi/Salvatore 1997, 13-53, 67-70, 81-85.

⁴¹ Su Aquileia tardoantica si vedano le opere citate alla nota 23.

⁴² Witschel, in questo volume, 372.

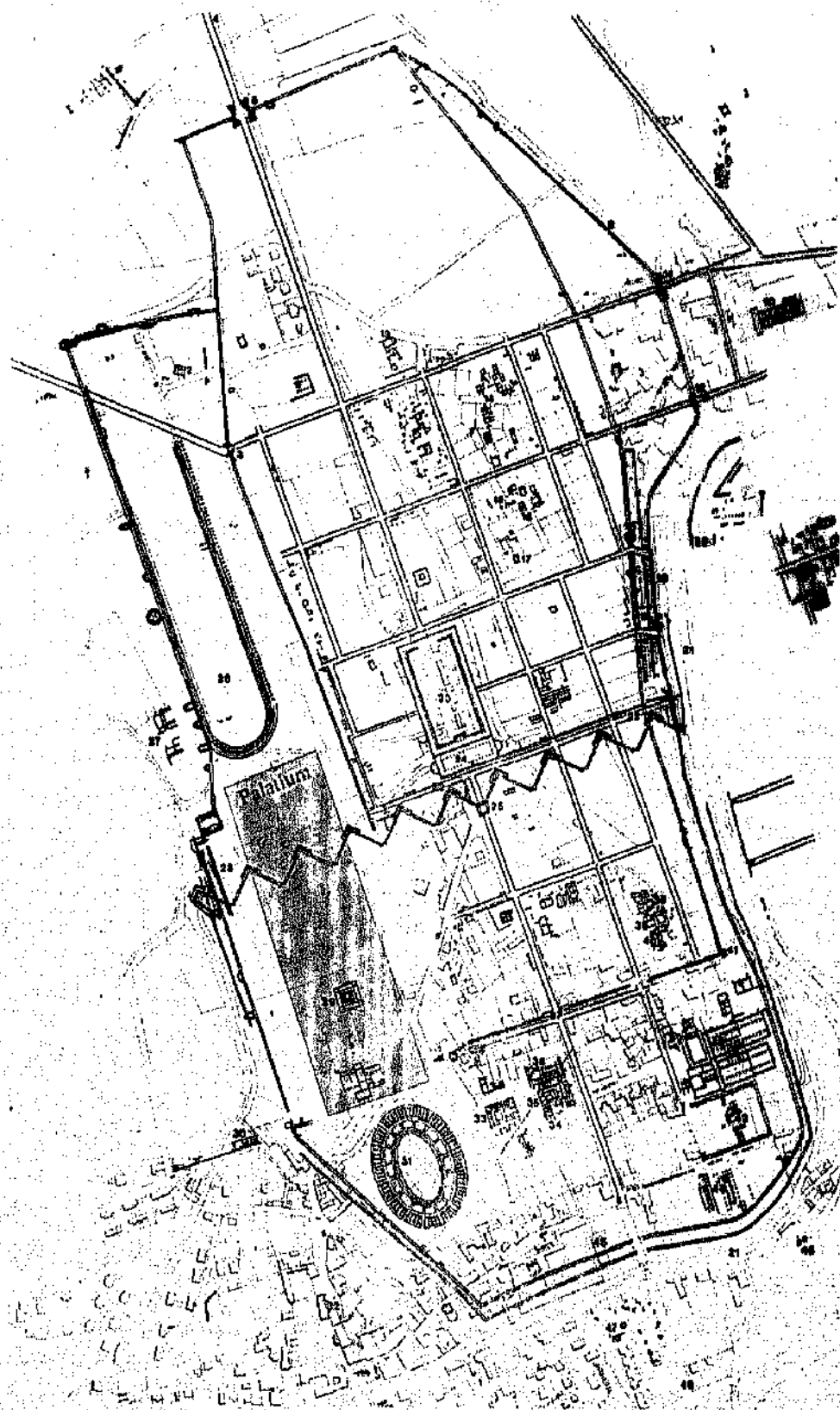


fig. 3: Planimetria di Aquileia tardoantica (rielaborazione da Bertacchi).

Nel III secolo e nell'età costantiniana furono anche riadattate le strutture del porto fluviale. Sono attestate inoltre numerose dimore urbane di lusso, realizzate fra III e IV secolo, delle quali una, con ambienti che misurano sino a m 20 di lato, sita fra circo e anfiteatro, si sospetta potesse essere stata parte di una vera e propria struttura palaziale. Le dimore aquileiesi più ricche sono abbellite con mosaici che manifestano forti influssi dello stile dell'arte africana.

Nella prima metà del IV secolo si sviluppa, nel settore sud-orientale, il nucleo della prima cattedrale cristiana, ad opera del vescovo Teodoro. Alla fine del IV secolo, la parte meridionale delle mura è ristrutturata e rafforzata. Come già visto per Canosa, lo sviluppo politico del centro urbano ha le sue positive ripercussioni anche sul territorio circostante. Recenti indagini hanno indicato un incremento della densità dei siti rurali proprio nel IV secolo, in corrispondenza con il momento di maggiore successo politico della città, ma contemporaneamente anche un cambiamento della morfologia dell'insediamento suburbano, ove sembrano prevalere tipologie improntate a semplicità architettonica che non a grande sontuosità residenziale.⁴³

Tornando all'ambito strettamente urbano, l'indubbia ripresa che la città conosce in età tardoantica non si identifica in un mero ripristino della *forma urbis* classica. Innanzitutto, va sottolineato che, dalle imprese edilizie attestate durante tutto questo periodo, appare estranea l'azione della comunità cittadina. Anche gli interventi sinora conosciuti di abbellimento del foro, cuore dell'identità civica, rimandano all'azione del governatore. La città quindi rifiorisce per opera di un apparato, quello imperiale, che di essa riconosce indubbiamente la centralità nel territorio, ma soprattutto come centro di coordinamento delle proprie funzionalità e come palcoscenico su cui si dispiegano e si attuano i programmi per la propria celebrazione.

Si comprende bene che, in quest'ottica, cambia anche il significato e la gerarchia dei luoghi urbani. Ad esempio, il foro continua senza dubbio a mantenere una centralità topografica; ma non è detto che esso, di fronte al preponderante interventismo governativo, conservasse contemporaneamente con altrettanta evidenza la centralità che aveva avuto per secoli, e cioè quella di centro per eccellenza dell'autogoverno urbano. E non può essere sottovalutato il fatto che l'inserimento di una residenza imperiale all'interno della città – probabilmente proprio a ridosso del foro – rendesse ben chiaro ai cittadini di Aquileia quanto fosse cambiata la dinamica del controllo degli spazi urbani.⁴⁴

⁴³ Magrini 1997.

⁴⁴ Sull'esistenza di un vero e proprio palazzo imperiale ad Aquileia le opinioni non sono concordi: Jäggi 1990, 169–170, ritiene che i dati disponibili siano troppo scarni per poterla affermare con certezza, mentre Duval 1973 e ancora 1992 ritiene che, sebbene le evidenze archeologiche non siano al momento sufficientemente chiare, le fonti scritte forniscano indicazioni bastanti per opinare che, almeno al tempo di Costantino, esistesse in città un luogo che svolgesse funzioni di residenza per l'imperatore. La Jäggi (1990, 159) ricorda che è attestata, in epoca tardoantica, la presenza stabile ad Aquileia di alti funzionari imperiali, quali il *praepositus thesaurorum*, il *praefectus classis Venetum*, il *procurator monetae* e, soprattutto, il *comes Italiae*. Tenendo in considerazione le recenti riflessioni di Heijmans 1998 sul 'Palais de la Trouille' ad Arles, è possibile immaginare che un complesso architettonico di grandi dimensioni fungesse,

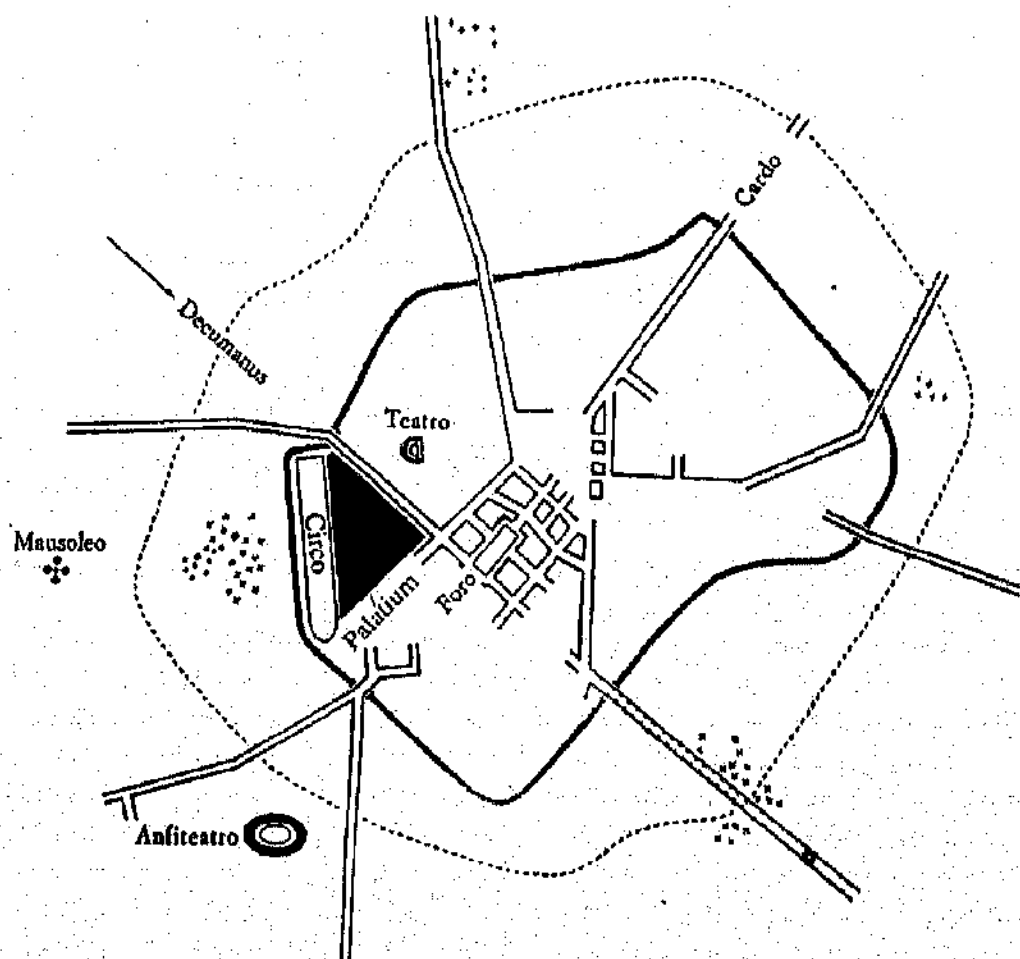


fig. 4: Planimetria di Milano tardoantica (rielaborazione da Krautheimer).

Intorno al 380, il poeta e grammatico Decimo Magno Ausonio, precettore dell'imperatore Graziano e uomo potentissimo a corte durante il quindicennio 368-383, cristiano anche se non particolarmente fervente, compone il poema *Ordo nobilium urbium*, di cui ho già ricordato la menzione di Capua. In esso compare anche un passaggio sulla capitale imperiale di allora, Milano [fig. 4], che è utile riportare per intero: "A Milano ogni cosa è degna di ammirazione: vi è profusione di ricchezze e innumerevoli sono le case signorili; la popolazione è di grandi capacità, eloquente ed affabile. La città si è ingrandita, ed è circondata da una duplice cerchia di mura: vi sono il circo, dove il popolo gode degli spettacoli, il teatro, con le gradinate a cuneo, i templi, l'arce del palazzo imperiale, la zecca, le terme erculee, grandi come un intero quartiere. I colonnati (secondo Krautheimer le strade colonnate)⁴⁵ sono adorni di statue marmoree, le

allo stesso tempo, tanto da sede permanente di funzionari di alto rango, quanto da residenza temporanea per i sovrani. Il suo impatto sull'assetto urbanistico generale della città e, nella fattispecie, la sua collocazione a ridosso dell'area forense, permettono, a mio avviso, di equipararlo ad un 'palazzo imperiale' vero e proprio.

⁴⁵ Krautheimer 1987, 110.

*mura sono circondate da una cintura di argini fortificati. Le sue costruzioni sono una più imponente dell'altra, come se fossero fra sé rivali, e non ne sminuisce la grandezza nemmeno la vicinanza con Roma".*⁴⁶

Il passo propone un'immagine della città che lascia stupiti per la sua precisione, poiché ricorda non solo monumenti di antica origine, ma elenca anche le principali realizzazioni di epoca tardoantica, come ad esempio le mura, il palazzo imperiale, le terme erculee.⁴⁷ Allo stesso tempo, però, registra delle omissioni sorprendenti, la prima delle quali è certamente quella relativa agli edifici cristiani, ancor più inaspettata se si pensa che la Milano di quei decenni è quella del vescovo Ambrogio. Ma l'assenza più singolare della lista ausoniana è probabilmente quella del foro, che non viene considerato tra i segni caratterizzanti della magnificenza cittadina. Io credo che la compresenza di queste due omissioni non sia casuale, ma lasci intravedere una visione dello spazio urbano, alternativo alla città ereditata, di tipo municipale, ma che non è ancora sottoposto alla condizionante presenza di un episcopato politicamente concorrente, quale si configura con Ambrogio, soprattutto nell'ultimo quindicennio del IV secolo.

L'ideale è quello che potremmo definire, tentativamente, della *città-scenario*, destinata a rispecchiare soprattutto la presenza del potere e la sua capacità di conferire *decus* e piacevolezza all'ambiente urbano. *Cardo* e *decumanus* sono trasformati in percorsi monumentalizzati, come testimonia, oltre al passo di Ausonio, anche il ritrovamento della via porticata, costruita a metà del IV secolo, che prolunga il decumano all'esterno delle mura, verso Roma, e che si conclude con un grande *tetrapylon*.⁴⁸ Questi assi viari divengono così dei *boulevards* che hanno nel foro uno snodo logistico, ma non più il loro ideale punto di convergenza, poiché il foro, a sua volta, vive all'ombra dell'ingombrante presenza del palazzo imperiale, che occupa tutto il quarto occidentale della città.⁴⁹ Da centro della politica cittadina, il foro diviene dunque una sorta di *platea palatii*, soglia della città proibita del potere, come è stato del resto verificato in tutte le capitali tetrarchiche, compresa la loro più diretta erede, Costantinopoli.⁵⁰ Similmente ad esse, anche in Milano il circo, luogo di *congregatio* per eccellenza delle masse urbane, si collega organicamente al palazzo.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Auson. ordo 35-45.

⁴⁷ Sulle vicende storico-politiche di Milano capitale imperiale la sintesi di Cracco Ruggini 1990.

⁴⁸ Caporusso 1990; Arslan/Caporusso 1991, 356-357.

⁴⁹ Sul foro di Milano, Ceresa Mori 1992. Per quanto riguarda il *palatium* di Milano, Duval 1992 riporta all'opportuna attenzione tutti i dubbi relativi alla sua localizzazione in città, sebbene in definitiva mantenga, come il più probabile, il sito tra il foro e il circo; più determinata nell'accettare questa localizzazione è invece la Lusuardi 1990, alla luce dell'esame incrociato delle testimonianze archeologiche e di quelle delle fonti scritte, anche di età medievale.

⁵⁰ Dagron 1991, 95-101, pone in risalto come i "fori" di Costantinopoli, tutti disposti lungo la *via Regia*, non siano altro, in realtà, che delle sorte di "casce architettoniche di risonanza" (le virgolette sono mie) del percorso trionfale d'ingresso del sovrano in città, in direzione del palazzo imperiale.

⁵¹ Sul problema del significato del plesso palazzo-circo nella città tardoantica, per il quale esiste una vastissima bibliografia, si rinvia a McCormick 1986, 35-63, 84-99; McCormack 1995, 115-120; Vespignani 2001.

Gli altri edifici menzionati dalla lode di Ausonio, accertati anche archeologicamente, sono tutti legati alla sfera del divertimento e del pubblico benessere (teatro e terme), ovvero all'ostentazione dei simboli del potere statale (zecca e mura). Accanto ad essi, viene celebrato lo splendore delle dimore private, di cui i ritrovamenti archeologici testimoniano, per il IV secolo, la ricchezza delle decorazioni musive. Ma la vita dei cittadini non sembra raccordarsi – almeno nelle parole del poeta che parla il linguaggio della corte imperiale – a nessuno spazio pubblico che ad essi appartenga come luogo di manifestazione della loro potestà di governare lo spazio urbano.

Ravenna: una capitale *in vitro*?

Nei primi anni del V secolo Ravenna prende il testimone da Milano come sede del governo imperiale d'Occidente [fig. 5]. La struttura della città, in precedenza modestissimo centro urbano, viene letteralmente stravolta dal nuovo compito che è chiamata ad assolvere. Da un punto di vista strettamente dimensionale, la città tardoantica quintuplica la superficie racchiusa dalla cinta muraria della città classica. L'area urbana viene delimitata, sotto Valentiniano III, durante il secondo quarto del V secolo, da un nuovo giro di mura. Questo dato di partenza basta per comprendere che, nel caso di Ravenna, diversamente anche dalla stessa Milano, abbiamo a che fare con una città praticamente re-inventata in età tardoantica.⁵²

Rispetto all'area preesistente, il maggiore ampliamento dell'area urbana avviene in direzione nord-est, a formare quella che viene definita *regio tertia* o *regio Caesarum*. In questo settore si insedia il palazzo imperiale. In riferimento ad esso s'impone il rinnovato assetto dell'intero centro urbano. Lungo il palazzo corre infatti la cosiddetta *platea maior*, via porticata che collega le porte settentrionale e meridionale del nuovo circuito murario. Proprio di fronte al palazzo si diparte, ad angolo retto rispetto alla *platea maior*, un'altra via porticata. Sull'incrocio di quest'ultima con la *platea maior*, sempre di fronte al palazzo, si trova la zecca imperiale. Questa seconda via porticata connette il palazzo direttamente al complesso episcopale, costituito dalla cattedrale, dal battistero, dalla residenza del vescovo e dai *balnea* del clero. Il complesso episcopale raccorda il nuovo impianto stradale della *regio III* con la *regio I*, che è costituita dall'originario nucleo urbano. Dalla cattedrale iniziava il vecchio decumano cittadino che si andava ad incrociare con il *cardo maximus* ove sorgeva il foro cittadino, che a questo punto veniva a collocarsi in una posizione non più centrale rispetto al baricentro complessivo della città, e che doveva essere più che altro una *statio* del percorso d'ingresso trionfale alla città dalla porta sud-ovest – la cosiddetta porta Aurea –, che costituiva il terminale in Ravenna della via Popilia. Percorso che, superato il complesso della cattedrale, finiva per raggiungere frontalmente sempre il sacro palazzo.

⁵² Farioli Campanati 1992; Gelichi 2000; Augenti et al. 2002, Augenti et al. 2003, con bibliografie di riferimento.

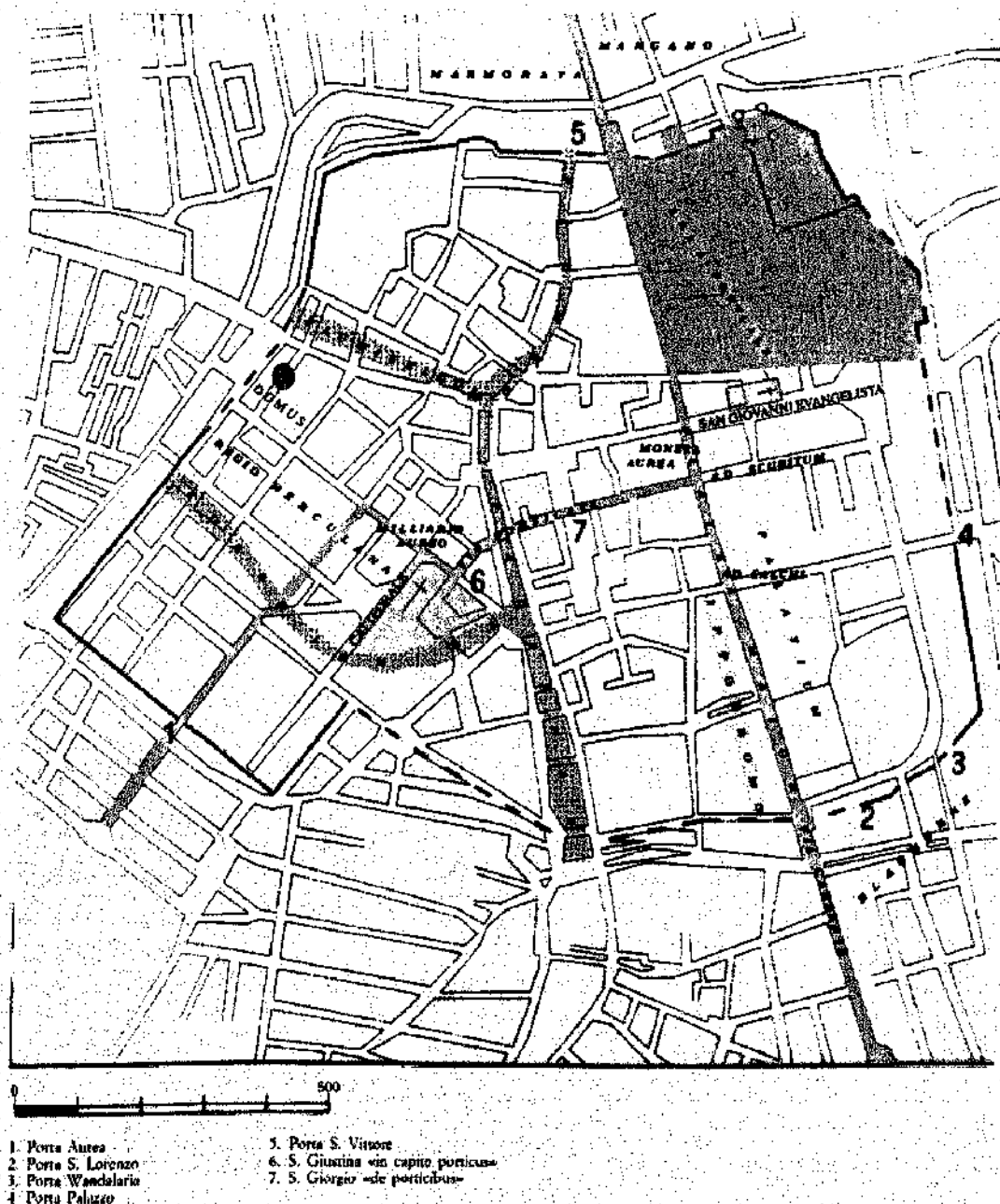


fig. 5: Planimetria di Ravenna tardoantica (rielaborazione da *Magistra Barbaritas*).

E' significativo che, nella zona nuova della città, a ridosso del palazzo imperiale e della zecca, non sia stato sinora identificato nessuno spazio aperto di tipo forense direttamente legato alle due vie porticate, che formano quindi un sistema di assi prospettici monumentalizzati, che hanno nel palazzo il loro punto d'inizio e di fuga. Va ricordato, a questo proposito, che il fronte nord del complesso palaziale – che comprendeva la chiesa palatina di San Giovanni Evangelista – affacciava direttamente sul bacino portuale interno della città. L'unico spazio aperto di tipo pubblico che fu sicuramente realizzato in questo settore di

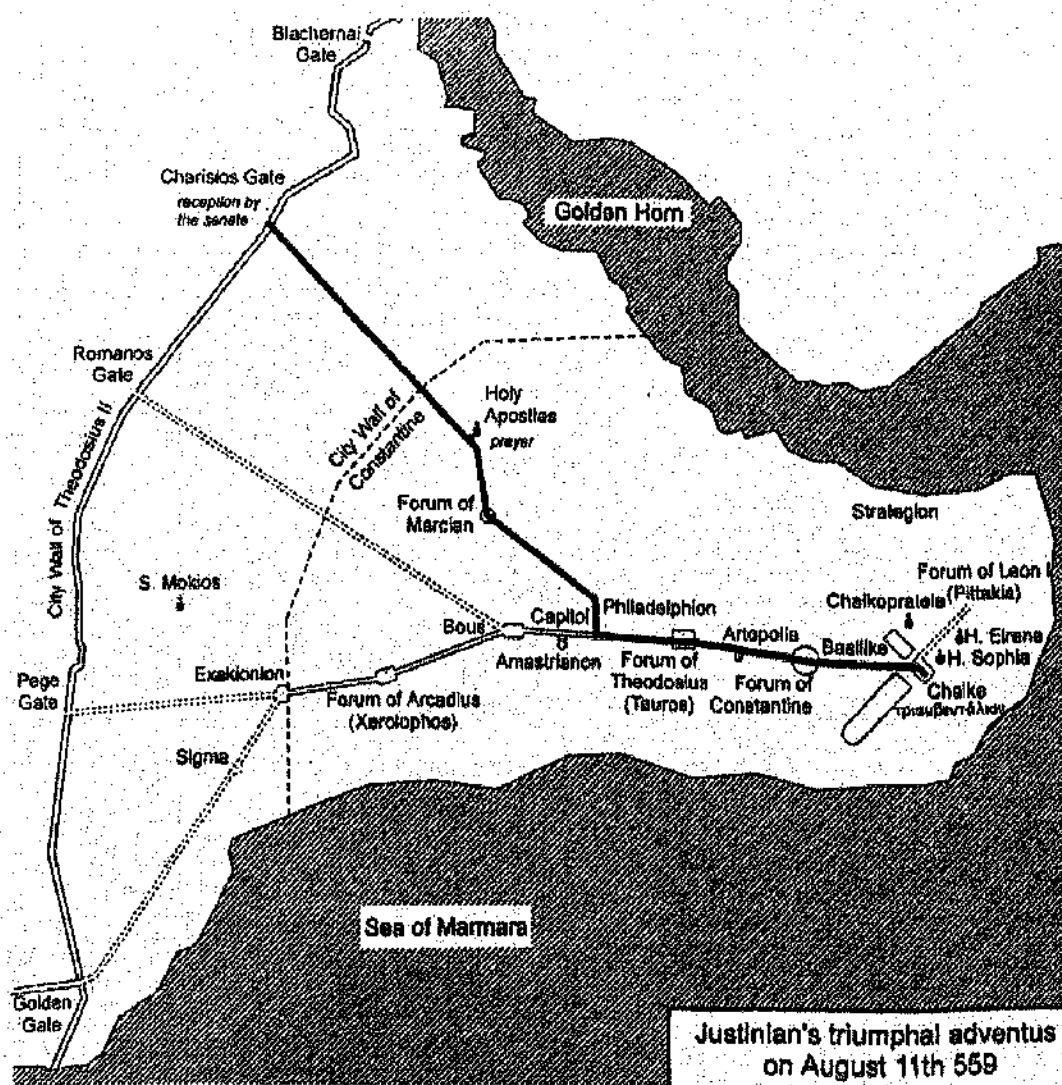


fig. 6: Planimetria di Costantinopoli (da MacCormick).

Ravenna è il circo, che si trovava di fronte al palazzo, tra quest'ultimo e il margine meridionale delle mura: il rapporto tra pubbliche adunate – in uno spazio pur sempre destinato a scopi ludici – e l'incombente presenza del potere non poteva essere più esplicito.

La saldatura, rappresentata dalla via porticata, tra il palazzo e la cattedrale, mostra come il clima culturale fosse decisamente cambiato rispetto ai decenni del IV secolo. In questo periodo, infatti, la contiguità del potere imperiale con la religione cristiana è ormai un dato di fatto, condiviso non solo dalle cerchie più prossime alla corte, ma anche dalla maggioranza della popolazione, in tutte le sue componenti sociali. Tuttavia, non può sfuggire che la via porticata, che collega il sito della cattedrale a quello del palazzo come una sorta di cordone ombelicale, trova comunque in quest'ultimo il proprio centro generatore.

Come ha giustamente rilevato Raffaella FARIOLI, il rapporto di forte e non paritario collegamento tra il ramo occidentale e quello orientale della dinastia

ANCIENT CITY OF ANTIOCH

(Restored plan based on literary texts and the excavations, adapted from Downey 1961, fig. 11, after Wilber)

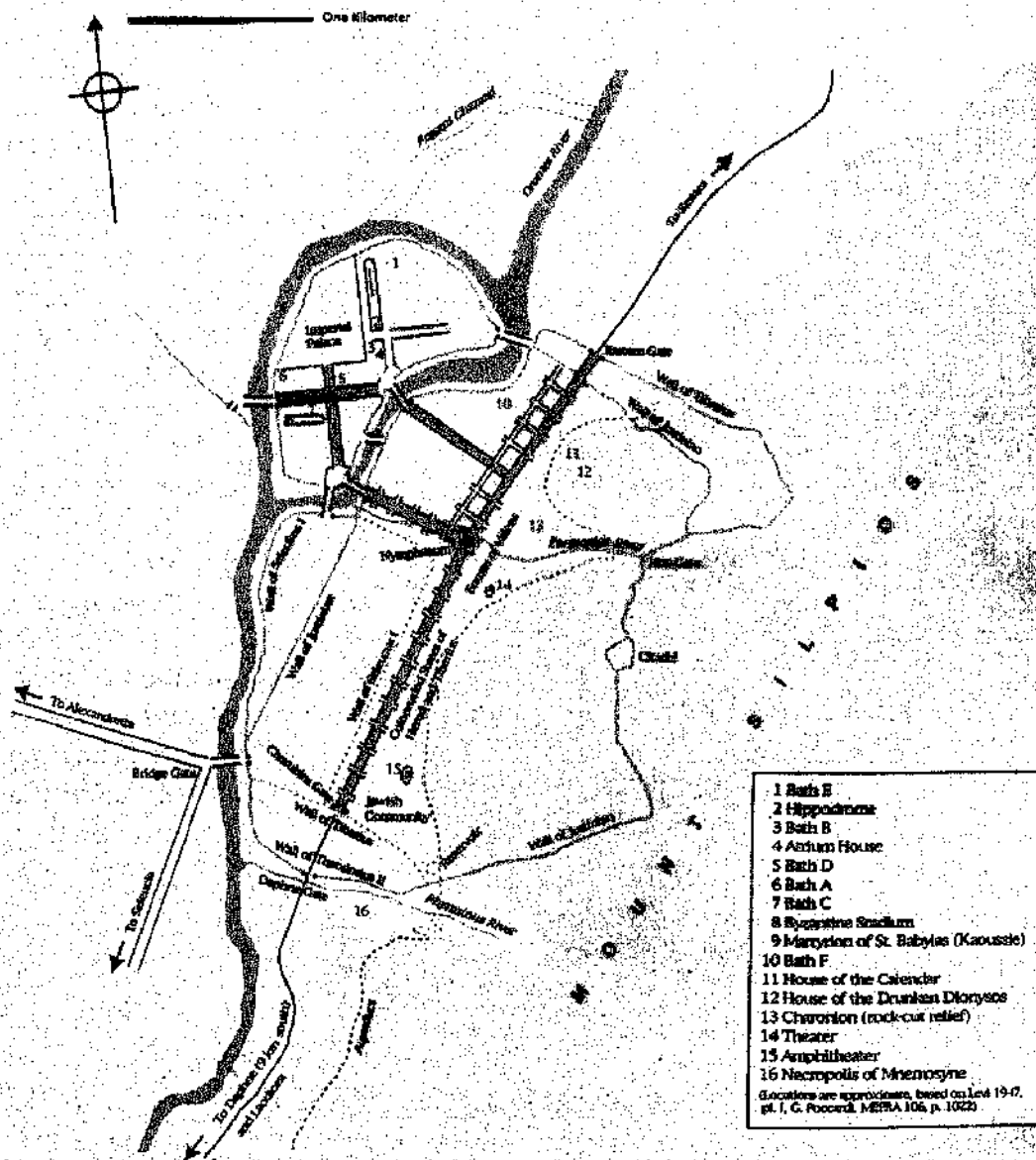


fig. 7: Planimetria di Antiochia tardoantica (da Kondoleon).

teodosiana deve essere considerato come una delle ragioni per spiegare l'idea alla base delle realizzazioni ravennati del V secolo, vale a dire l'imitazione del sistema urbano della Costantinopoli di Arcadio e Teodosio II [fig. 6]: un grande proscenio impiantato sui due principali assi viari, che convergono prospetticamente verso il *solum imperii*, il palazzo, dove vive, invisibile ma imminente, l'imperatore, tramite fra Dio e il mondo. In virtù della santità della sovrana presenza, la città raccoglie e moltiplica, al proprio interno, le memorie degli uomini venerabili che con la loro vita hanno glorificato Dio. Così a Ravenna si spiega la proliferazione delle chiese che richiamano i culti più popolari nella

Nuova Roma e, più in generale, la proliferazione dei toponimi che hanno nel sacro palazzo sul Bosforo la loro prima origine.

In questo quadro di riferimenti aulici si sviluppa, nel sistema urbano ravennate, anche quanto è legato alle funzioni concrete della residenzialità e delle attività produttive. All'interno della città esisteva, come è noto, un sistema di vie d'acqua il cui ramo principale, tra l'altro similmente ad esempio con quanto accadeva ad Antiochia [fig. 7], separava nettamente la *regio Caesarum* con il palazzo, dal resto della città.⁵³ Questo corso d'acqua, il *fluvius Padennae* che si ricollegava a sua volta al Po, metteva in comunicazione Ravenna con il suo sobborgo portuale, Classe. Quest'ultimo funge da doppio speculare della città vera e propria, concentrando attività produttive e commerciali, mentre non vi è stata finora riscontrata edilizia privata di prestigio, quale si comincia a conoscere nella zona centrale di Ravenna, grazie ad esempio allo scavo della monumentale *domus* di via d'Azeglio, con fasi d'uso comprese tra la fine del IV e il VI secolo.⁵⁴

Il tessuto delle grandi *domus* urbane, la cui presenza abbiamo potuto verificare in tutti i casi di 'città di successo' dell'Italia tardoantica sin qui esaminati, conferma l'impressione che l'identità urbana, nell'Italia tardoantica, non può esaurirsi in una dimensione, se mi è permesso il termine, esclusivamente 'palaziale' della città. Anche se è chiaro che il centro del potere statale, rappresentato da una residenza imperiale o governatoriale, accende le condizioni affinché un centro urbano superi la crisi delle istituzioni municipali tradizionali, nondimeno esiste una dimensione corale della partecipazione al governo delle città, mediata attraverso forme nuove di rapporto con il potere centrale, che si esprime nel dinamismo del notabilato locale, un tema sul quale molto resta ancora da dire e su cui molto si è discusso proprio in questo convegno. E proprio questo tema ci ricollega al luogo dal quale, parlando di Italia, non si può mai sfuggire: Roma.

Roma, etimasia di un Impero

L'Urbe [fig. 8], paradossalmente, durante il IV secolo, conosce un percorso per certi versi opposto a quello delle città sulle quali ci siamo sin qui soffermati.⁵⁵ La presenza imperiale, che aveva improntato di sé l'ambiente urbano, con realizzazioni ininterrotte dall'età di Augusto a quella di Settimio Severo, dopo la costruzione del Palatino suburbano di Massenzio si attenua.⁵⁶ Ma non per questo si attenua la consapevolezza della rilevanza politica e ideologica che riveste il mantenimento, in una prospettiva di eternità, del *decus* del *caput imperii*.

Proprio nell'edilizia privata di prestigio sembra manifestarsi più concretamente la radice della forza che sostiene la città in età tardoantica. Come è ben noto, essa si identifica in massima parte con le dimore di quel patriziato urbano,

⁵³ Bejor 1993 e Kondoleon 2000, con bibliografia di riferimento.

⁵⁴ Marini Calvani/Maioli 1995, Branzi Maltoni et al. 2003.

⁵⁵ Un esame d'insieme dei dati archeologici sulle fasi tardoantiche di Roma in Augenti 1996.

⁵⁶ Augenti 2000; Pisani Sartorio 2000.

Rome: intramural Christian centres, c. AD 500

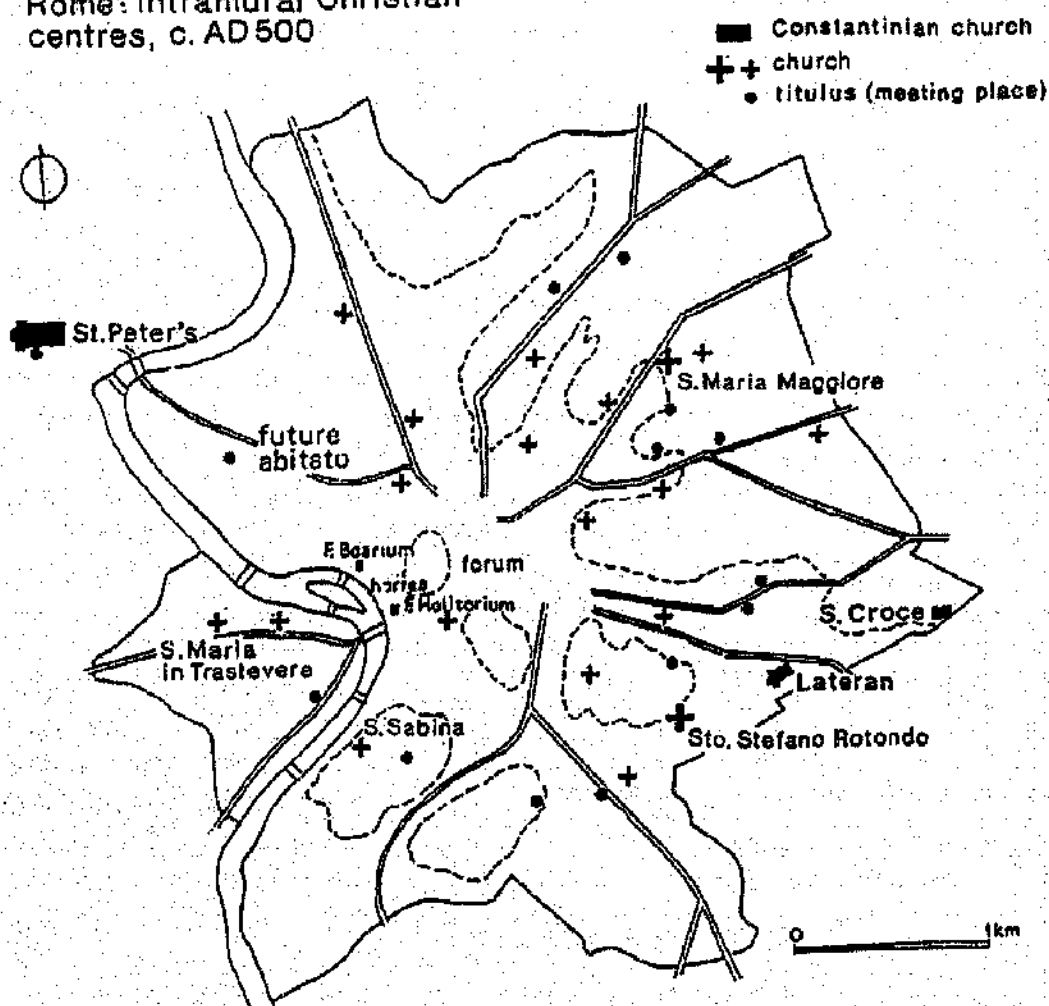


fig. 8. Planimetria di Roma tardoantica (da Krautheimer).

che si identifica con il *senatus Vrbis*, dai grandi orizzonti economici e politici, che è una componente essenziale per il mantenimento della continuità dei connotati più tradizionali della città in età tardoantica e, allo stesso tempo, vi introduce, proprio attraverso innovative idee sui luoghi e i modi dell'abitare, elementi di cambiamento profondo, che determinano rilevanti innovazioni nello skyline cittadino di questo periodo, permettendo di considerare questo periodo come uno dei più creativi della storia dell'architettura residenziale romana.

Talune di queste case possono con sicurezza essere associate ad alcune delle famiglie più importanti della Roma tardoantica. Molte di esse sono state identificate topograficamente e di alcune è stato possibile affrontare un'interpretazione archeologica.⁵⁷ Tali complessi, non solo forniscono una chiara impressione del livello delle spese che potevano essere affrontate nella cerchia aristocratica, ma anche della ricca temperie culturale che generò nuove espressioni architettoniche

⁵⁷ Guidobaldi 1986; 1993; 1999; 2000.

ed artistiche di potenza e di prestigio, e quindi anche di nuovi modelli di controllo degli spazi urbani.

Purtroppo ancora sappiamo poco circa la relazione tra questi siti e le zone urbane circostanti in cui si trovavano anche abitazioni ordinarie, e ciò è vero specialmente per le aree con usi prevalentemente residenziali, come l'Esquilino.⁵⁸ Eppure cominciamo certamente a comprendere che questi complessi riuscivano talvolta ad imporsi su un preesistente, prestigioso contesto urbano, composto di edifici e spazi pubblici, così come è stato accertato nel Campo Marzio, nel caso della *domus* costruita nel *diribitorium*⁵⁹, per la *domus* posta sotto all'attuale Museo Barracco,⁶⁰ e per le case sul Celio, che bloccavano o deviavano strade preesistenti.⁶¹ Evidentemente ciò avveniva in casi in cui spazi e monumenti coinvolti non erano considerati rilevanti, nella generale politica di 'tutela' dell'immagine pubblica della città.⁶²

Tutto ciò ci conduce ad una serie di considerazioni riguardo la disponibilità di spazio all'interno della città (non intendo solo la disponibilità fisica, ma anche quella giuridica e politica) che rendeva possibile profondi rimodellamenti di settori urbani, attraverso massicce demolizioni e ricostruzioni. C'è il bisogno di interpretare questi fenomeni attraverso prospettive politiche e simboliche, dato che non possiamo sicuramente leggere l'apparire di tali edifici come un segno della decadenza della città classica: erano essi il segno di un indebolimento dell'egemonia imperiale-sullo spazio urbano, e quindi il risultato del fatto che durante il IV secolo l'aristocrazia senatoria, gestendo con maggiore libertà che in passato il potere sulla città, la modellava a sua propria immagine determinando una nuova geografia dell'insediamento?⁶³

L'aristocrazia senatoria occupava gli uffici che controllavano l'enorme flusso di ricchezze messo in moto per garantire la sopravvivenza di Roma, che costituiva il palcoscenico su cui si rappresentava l'eternità dell'impero. Le case di questo ceto sociale, monumentalizzate con basiliche, *triclinia* e *accubita*, e adornate con colonne e marmi preziosissimi,⁶⁴ costituivano una delle quinte di

⁵⁸ Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 1996.

⁵⁹ Guidobaldi 1986, 175-181; Manacorda 1993; Consalvi 1998.

⁶⁰ Cimino/Le Pera 1998.

⁶¹ Brenk 2000; Carignani 2000; Pavolini 1993; 1996; 2000; Spinola 2000. Lo stesso tipo di 'invadenza' è riscontrata da Pavolini nelle modalità di inserimento della cosiddetta *Bibliotheca Agapiti* sulle pendici occidentali del Celio (Pavolini/Giuliani 1999, 90-91), la cui costruzione viene, dal suddetto studioso, collocata nella fase centrale del IV secolo.

⁶² Si veda anche il caso delle recenti scoperte effettuate alle falde del Palatino, illustrate in Hostetter 1994. Vale la pena ricordare brevemente che il Foro di Roma - che da tempo era divenuto il proscenio della più alta committenza imperiale - diviene nel IV secolo un luogo di privilegiato di interventi di ricostruzione o restauro di edifici e spazi, erezione di statue ed altro (Ward Perkins 1984, 38-48; Augenti 1996, 964-966), patrocinati principalmente dalla prefettura urbana, magistratura che, in certo senso, incarna il concorrere congiunto della sollecitudine imperiale e dell'impegno aristocratico alla conservazione della città.

⁶³ Ho illustrato più approfonditamente il mio punto di vista su questi problemi in Marazzi 2001b, con relativa bibliografia.

⁶⁴ Amm. 38.4.12.

questo palcoscenico. Una collettività di eletti aveva preso nel IV secolo in consegna la cura di questo palcoscenico dalle mani dell'imperatore e riproponeva, nel linguaggio aulico dell'architettura delle proprie residenze diffuse nella città, lo spirito del *decus* che a tutta la città doveva appartenere.

In questo tipo di contesti, le tradizionali modalità di confronto tra le plebi e gli ottimati, e il modo in cui erano affrontate e risolte le tensioni sociali mediante l'allestimento di spettacoli e intrattenimenti e la risoluzione dei problemi del rifornimento del mercato urbano, si arricchiscono di una serie di implicazioni legate alla capacità delle élites cittadine di dialogare con i vertici del potere imperiale per convogliare risorse e favori verso la città e garantire il miglior funzionamento possibile della macchina burocratica che doveva assolvere a questo compito.⁶⁵ Sicuramente, in molti contesti, un ruolo crescente, nel corso del V secolo, fu giocato dalla Chiesa, dalla sua popolarità che si accresceva attraverso forme nuove di dialogo con le masse cittadine.

Proprio a questo proposito è d'uopo mettere a fuoco anche la dinamica dell'espansione delle fondazioni cristiane a Roma nel V secolo. Charles PIETRI ha evidenziato che, se si vuole comprendere l'espansione dell'"*établissement matériel*" della chiesa all'interno della città di Roma nel corso del V secolo, è indispensabile valutare innanzitutto gli sforzi compiuti dall'élite urbana romana la cui maggioranza si era convertita al cristianesimo tra la fine del IV e l'inizio del V secolo.⁶⁶ La grande stagione delle edificazioni delle chiese titolari, che sboccia tra l'ultima decade del IV secolo il primo quarto del V, deve la sua fortuna in primo luogo alle notevoli iniezioni di risorse da parte dell'aristocrazia urbana, che si presenta quindi come il vero motore di questa trasformazione.⁶⁷ Essa fu anche l'artefice dell'istituzione delle prime istituzioni assistenziali cristiane, nonché di fondazioni monastiche, la cui esistenza è documentata da diverse fonti.⁶⁸ Le chiese titolari portavano il nome dei loro ricchi benefattori e in alcuni casi, come in quello del *titulus Vestinae*, possiamo osservare che la procedura di donazione veniva attivata al fine di ottenere il risultato di realizzare luoghi di culto che potessero concretamente sopravvivere.⁶⁹

La creazione delle chiese 'di quartiere' e il desiderio dei fondatori aristocratici di mantenerne il controllo, attraverso l'attribuzione ad esse di *plafond* patrimoniali, possono essere interpretati come un tentativo di guadagnare *consenso* e di esercitare una nuova forma di influenza (anche se condivisa con il potere episcopale), su specifiche aree urbane e sulla loro popolazione, in cui alcune famiglie

⁶⁵ Da ultimo, Vera 2000.

⁶⁶ Pietri 1981. Sulla prima fase, da collocarsi sotto Costantino, della formazione del patrimonio immobiliare urbano della Chiesa di Roma, si veda Marazzi 1995 e, da ultimo, Vera 2003.

⁶⁷ Sul problema, R. Lim 1999, 278-279, il quale asserisce che questo tipo di *evergetismo*, anche quando prende effettivamente piede tra gli aristocratici romani, mobilita comunque risorse infinitamente più limitate di quelle impegnate nei più tradizionali settori di investimento (spettacoli, distribuzioni alimentari).

⁶⁸ Santangeli Valenzani 1994 e 1995. Guidobaldi 1999 ribadisce in maniera, credo, conclusiva l'inestricabile legame fra le chiese titolari e l'edilizia abitativa di pregio.

⁶⁹ LP I pp. 220-222.

erano radicate per tradizione e legittimate per il loro prestigio. E' il senso comune a suggerire che il reale significato di tali fondazioni, lungi dall'essere una sorta di resa dell'aristocrazia senatoria alla Chiesa sul predominio dello spazio urbano, è piuttosto l'espressione della capacità della stessa aristocrazia ad essere concretamente concorrenziale, se non dominante, anche sul nuovo terreno di sfida creatosi con il definitivo successo della nuova religione.

Conclusioni

Concludendo questa mia riflessione su alcune realtà urbane dell'Italia tardoantica, credo sia utile ricapitolare qualche spunto sul quale ho cercato di soffermarmi di più:

1) Il passaggio tra l'età classica e l'età tardoantica non è un momento di crisi *tout-court* della funzione urbana in terra italiana. L'estinzione di numerosi nuclei urbani cui si assiste in varie regioni della Penisola è un fenomeno di lunga durata, che interessa tutto il periodo imperiale e che costituisce un lento processo di riassetto della sostenibilità del numero totale di città, anche in relazione al mutato ruolo economico dell'Italia all'interno dello stato romano e ai nuovi criteri di organizzazione della proprietà agraria.

2) Le trasformazioni amministrative che l'Italia conosce tra la fine del III e l'inizio del IV secolo raccolgono e probabilmente accentuano l'eredità di questo processo selettivo, nel senso che il nuovo ordinamento provinciale, vicariale, prefetturale e imperiale cui l'Italia è sottoposta determina la formazione di una nuova gerarchia di città ad esso funzionale, al cui sostegno e sviluppo lo Stato concorre in maniera decisiva. Le città che entrano, per varie vie, a far parte di questo gioco, sono città vincenti in età tardoantica. Le altre non è detto che muoiano, ma probabilmente hanno più difficoltà a recuperare rispetto al trend discendente di lunga durata, di cui ho appena fatto menzione.⁷⁰

3) Il nuovo ordinamento statale ha bisogno delle città, sia per fini meramente organizzativi e amministrativi, sia per fini politico-propagandistici. Questo dato di fatto comporta la definizione di una diversa gerarchia degli spazi urbani, all'interno della quale s'impongono i luoghi d'insediamento delle rappresentanze del potere e i percorsi legati alle loro epifanie; i tradizionali luoghi del pubblico intrattenimento (terme, circhi, anfiteatri) mantengono la loro importanza, ma sovente ne viene enfatizzata la natura di frutti della generosità e provvidenza del potere; sembrano uscire perdenti, o profondamente ridiscussi nelle loro funzioni spazi legati alle forme tradizionali di autogoverno urbano, come il foro e gli edifici ad esso normalmente annessi.⁷¹ Al contrario, acquista nuova centralità –

⁷⁰ Brogiolo 1999, 101–105, per un inquadramento delle linee generali del problema, limitatamente all'Italia settentrionale.

⁷¹ Nota giustamente Lavan (2003, 315–318), che non è tanto da porre in questione la sopravvivenza di per sé degli spazi forensi in età tardoantica, quanto di riflettere sulla loro trasformazione del loro significato, nelle città principali, in conseguenza della prossimità ad essi delle residenze del potere imperiale o dei rappresentanti di esso.

cosa che è particolarmente visibile nelle città ove l'intervento imperiale è diretto e profondamente rinnovatore dell'assetto urbano, come Milano e Ravenna – la costruzione di grandi assi viari, eventualmente scanditi da archi e/o incroci monumentalizzati e fiancheggiati da portici, veri e propri boulevards celebrativi della maestà del potere, spesso pensati per accogliere i percorsi trionfali del sovrano. Se e come i pubblici poteri intervenissero sul *decus* delle altre aree della città, alle spalle di queste quinte monumentali, è difficile dire allo stato attuale delle conoscenze.⁷²

4) I nuovi meccanismi di governo delle città, legati ad uno schema certamente più verticistico di gestione del potere, non annullano l'importanza del notabilato locale che prospera inserendosi all'interno di detti meccanismi. La fioritura dell'edilizia urbana residenziale di prestigio nel IV secolo, fenomeno ancora in gran parte da esplorare, testimonia delle opportunità di benessere che si aprono in questo periodo per coloro che cooperano nell'amministrazione urbana evolutasi con il nuovo ordinamento imperiale.

5) L'indiscutibile crescita d'importanza del cristianesimo a partire da Costantino e la nascita degli edifici di culto in città non deve essere sovrapposta, a mio avviso, alle altre dinamiche di trasformazione della città stessa, che ho appena ricordato. Inoltre, non vanno dimenticate due cose: la prima è che comunque, per gran parte del IV secolo, l'impatto della presenza cristiana nelle città italiane è assai contenuto; la seconda è che la crescita che in esse si registra del numero delle chiese e dei santuari cristiani a partire dallo scorcio tra IV e V secolo non è certo indice di una teocratizzazione del governo della città, bensì di una cristianizzazione progressiva della società urbana, che contribuisce, con le sue varie componenti, al successo di questo nuovo elemento. Tra queste componenti, come ben dimostra il caso di Ravenna, agisce da protagonista il potere imperiale, inserendo vigorosamente la componente cristiana nella definizione di uno spazio destinato innanzitutto alla propria celebrazione.

Il fenomeno della crescita della presenza cristiana nel paesaggio urbano di questo periodo non va quindi mai visto scisso dalla pluralità di significati e funzioni che la città riveste e mantiene, o acriticamente sovrapposto ad essi, almeno sino che la società e lo stato tardoantichi non si dissolvono interamente. Dimenticare o sottovalutare questo, significa rischiare di cadere in una visione confessionale e teleologica dell'urbanesimo taroloromano, che appiattisce la complessità dei segnali che ci giungono dalle realtà cittadine di quei secoli.

⁷² E' ben noto che l'elemento è una delle caratteristiche salienti dell'urbanistica di molte città dell'Oriente mediterraneo tardoantico che, al contrario di quanto accade nell'Occidente, continuano frequentemente ancora nel V e nella prima metà del VI secolo, a conoscere una fase di espansione e di profondo rimodellamento materiale; sia in alcune 'nuove fondazioni' meglio conosciute dell'età giustiniana, come ad esempio *Iustiniana Prima* e *Zenobia-Halebiyye* (Zanini 2003), sia in città dalla lunga storia urbana, come *Scythopolis* o *Gerasa* in Palestina (Tsafir/Foerster 1994; Walmsley 1996), la presenza dello spazio forense diviene assolutamente accessoria. La concezione di 'città nuove' contrassegnate da strade porticate con incroci monumentali e assenza di spazi forensi, sembra filtrare all'interno della cultura che presiede alle fondazioni dell'età omayyade (Northedge 1994; Hillenbrand 1999).

Nel corso del V secolo, il declino economico che investe l'Italia, insieme all'aggravarsi della situazione politica e militare della *pars Occidentis* determina un indebolimento generale – e spesso dagli esiti drammatici – delle possibilità d'investimento non solo per il mantenimento delle città, ma di tutto il sistema infrastrutturale della Penisola. Nondimeno, come è stato posto in evidenza da un magistrale contributo di Cristina LA ROCCA,⁷³ il senso del *decus* urbano resiste, ancora in età teodericianica, come sottolineatura del ruolo del governo in difesa di questo stesso *decus*, ed è esercitato soprattutto, nel solco di un programmatico tradizionalismo, in difesa delle strutture secolari della città. L'idea stessa della *civilitas* si accompagna al segno della *civitas*, vista come elemento ordinatore del territorio e cornice indispensabile dell'attendibilità di un potere che su di esso intenda governare.

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Decline and Change in the Cities of Late Antique Gaul

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The extraordinary success of the Roman world-system depended upon the establishment of a veneer of political and cultural homogeneity throughout the territories under its control, beneath the surface of which an infinite number of local variations were allowed to flourish. One of the foundations of that superficial uniformity was the city, whether in the form of an ideological vehicle for the presentation and dissemination of Roman values, a citizen community capable of functioning simultaneously as a self-governing unit and as an agency of central government, or a built environment featuring, at the very least, a basic repertoire of public amenities. These essential similarities between urban communities over the length and breadth of the empire create an ideal type of Roman city, the late antique fate of which can be considered comparatively against the background of the remodelling or fragmentation of the political formation which it had helped to generate. Among the greatest merits of Wolf LIEBESCHUETZ's suitably monumental contributions to this field has been the mastery of both eastern and western material which has enabled him, *inter alia*, to demonstrate how, even in regions with divergent political destinies, late antique developments in urban form and function often proceeded along similar lines, albeit at different speeds.¹ The much more modest aim of this paper is to explore the particular trajectory of late antique urbanism in just one area of the empire, Gaul, within the interpretative contexts of decline and change which form the theme of this colloquium.²

Gaul, of course, exhibits no consistent pattern or monotonous rhythm of late antique urban experience. Any brief comparative study of urban evolution in, let us say, Brittany, Aquitaine, and Belgica Secunda would suffice to demonstrate significant variation at the regional level. Even here the fortunes of individual centres can differ considerably, and sometimes in contradiction to the prevailing regional pattern or to more widespread trends. Up in the frontier zone, for example, there are various reasons to imagine that Trier remained an enduring pocket of *Romanitas* well into the fifth century, when in some of its neighbours the trappings of classical urban culture had more rapidly broken down.³ Down in Provence, meanwhile, the adjacent cities of Arles, Aix, and Marseille can be respectively characterised as imperial centre, disintegrating provincial capital,

¹ Liebeschuetz 1992; 2000; 2001.

² For the purposes of this paper, I am including the Roman provinces of Germania within Gaul, not least because in the fifth century the distinction becomes meaningless. But most of my examples will in any case be drawn from central and southern Gaul.

³ Anton 1987; Gauthier 1980, esp. 136–138.

and reviving Mediterranean emporium. These labels are superficial, but suffice to illustrate the considerable potential for variation in the late antique destinies of cities only a few kilometres apart.⁴ The likely influence of specific local circumstances on the development of individual communities must therefore be acknowledged at the outset, impossible though it is to do such factors justice within a synthesis of this nature. The emphasis here has to be on trying to identify some of the broad tendencies in the late antique Gallic urban trajectory, whilst remaining conscious of the myriad deviations from these hypothetical norms.

To highlight general trends, we might nevertheless appropriately begin with a single case-study from the heart of Gaul. The city of Clermont offers a distillation, albeit an especially potent one, of three of the most significant developments in late antique Gallic urbanism [see below Guyon, fig. 10]. The first, and perhaps the most striking, is the fortification of small fractions of existing centres, a development which would seem, on the face of it, to be indicative of a significant contraction of urban settlement. Like many Gallic cities, Clermont had probably reached its maximum extent around the early second century AD, when the urban area is thought to have encompassed around 90–100 hectares.⁵ Such calculations are necessarily imprecise, not to say potentially misleading; they serve only as a rough guide to the outer limits of urban space, not as confirmation of the continuous or intensive occupation of the whole of the area in question. But they do offer a point of comparison, however rudimentary, with the extent of settlement in subsequent periods. In the case of Clermont, the contrast seems to be especially stark. At an indeterminate date before the 470s, a wall-circuit was erected around part of the hilltop near the centre of the early imperial urban area.⁶ It enclosed little more than 2.5 hectares, an area inferior in extent to that of many a medieval castle-ward (or to that of four full-size football pitches, to adopt a readily-imaginable contemporary frame of reference). The city had previously lain undefended, so by its very existence the looming bulk of this rampart marks a significant change in its appearance, and assuredly its character. Since archaeological evidence for late antique Clermont is comparatively meagre, the precise spatial relationship of this circuit either to contemporary settlement, or to the public landscape of the earlier imperial period, is not entirely easy to discern. These are general problems to which we shall be returning in due course, but regardless of such ambiguities, it is clear that the widespread existence of circuits of this type is symptomatic of a fundamental transformation in attitudes to the city in late antique Gaul.

The impact of the construction of urban defences is intensified if it is evaluated alongside a second development that was simultaneously affecting every city in late antique Gaul, namely the conceptual redefinition of urban identity and the physical transformation of its monumental landscape under the

⁴ Guyon et al. 1998, 291–298; Heijmans 2004; Loseby 1992; 1998a.

⁵ Sauget/Pin 1992.

⁶ The *terminus ante quem* is provided by the Visigothic sieges of the early 470s, but at this point the walls were already dilapidated: Sidon. Epist. 7.7–8 (p. 110f.). For their possible early fifth-century date, see Maurin 1992.

inspiration of Christianity.⁷ In Clermont, for example, a significant proportion of the walled area was taken up from around the mid-fifth century by the magnificent cathedral erected by Bishop Namatius [see below Guyon, fig. 10: no. 1]. Its main church, as Gregory of Tours tells us in one of his biblically-inspired excursions into architectural description, was 44 metres long and 18 metres wide in its interior dimensions; around it considerable space would also have been required for the cluster of ancillary buildings which comprised a typical Gallic episcopal group.⁸ Little is known of these additional components of the Clermont complex, but its extensively-excavated counterpart at Geneva offers some indication of their likely number and volume. In its early fifth-century state the northern church here was very similar in scale to Namatius' cathedral (42 x 17 m), but it was flanked by a second church, a baptistery, and an episcopal residence of similarly substantial proportions. At a highly conservative estimate this cathedral complex thus occupied at least a sixth of the 5.5 ha enclosed by the late antique walls of Geneva [see below Guyon, fig. 1, nos. 1–5].⁹ The intra-mural area of Clermont was only half as extensive, and so is likely to have been dominated by church buildings to an even greater degree. No wonder that the bishop's residence here remained outside the walls at least for a time, conceivably because of the lack of suitable space within them.¹⁰

The erection of city-walls, together with the conventional implantation of cathedral complexes inside them, created new core areas within long-established urban landscapes. But even as this re-centring of cities was taking place, Christianity also had a countervailing and centrifugal effect on conceptions of urban space. Ancient custom, backed by force of law, had dictated the separation of the living from the dead, whose tombs were therefore located on the fringes of the city, often radiating out from it alongside the major roads.¹¹ In late Antiquity this practice remained the norm, even as the taboos confining the dead to the margins of the community were beginning to break down. The novelty lay less in the persistently suburban location of their tombs, than in the Christian recognition of some of their occupants as holy, which lent these peripheral burial-grounds a whole new lease of eternal life.¹² As a result, every city gradually evolved its own sacred geography, structured around the interplay between the cathedral complex and the churches which sprang up in growing number over the suburban resting-places of the saints.¹³ Clermont was no exception. When an anonymous tenth-century author drew up a geographically-organised catalogue of its holy places, he listed fifty-four churches, the vast majority of which stood outside the city-walls.¹⁴ Thanks in particular to Gregory of Tours, we know that at least sixteen of

⁷ Février 1980, esp. 423–449; Gauthier/Picard 1986ff.

⁸ Greg. Tur. Hist. 2.16 (p. 64); Guyon, this volume.

⁹ Bonnet 1993.

¹⁰ Greg. Tur. Hist. 2.21 (p. 67); Prévot 1989, 33.

¹¹ Harries 1993; Cantino Wataghin 1999; Rebillard 2003.

¹² Brown 1981; Beaujard 2000.

¹³ Hen 1995, 82–120; Loseby 1998b, 252–256.

¹⁴ Libellus de Ecclesiis Claromontanis, ed. W. Levison, MGH SRM VII, 456–467; Fournier 1970; Wood 2002.

them were already in existence before the end of the sixth century. Of these, only the episcopal group lay within the walls; two more churches probably stood within what had been the much more extensive urbanised area of the early imperial period [see below Guyon, fig. 10, nos. 14, 16]. The remainder were scattered around its periphery at some remove from the fortified core, with a particular concentration in a valley-bottom to the north of the city, over 600 metres from the cathedral, in an area known to Gregory as the *vicus christianorum*, where several of the city's early martyrs and bishops were buried [see below Guyon, fig. 10, nos. 3–7].¹⁵ Although the tiny wall-circuit might appear to denote a marked contraction of settlement at Clermont, the newly-sanctified suburbs out on its margins had paradoxically acquired an unprecedented significance in the life of the community. The new Christian urbanism had both redefined and complicated the notion of urban space.

These two developments, fortification and Christianisation, are late antique in origin, and assume readily identifiable architectural expression in the form of walls and churches. My third defining feature of late antique urbanism in Gaul, the role of cities as administrative centres, is not new, and nor is its significance so easy to recognise in the landscape, but it is no less important. The network of cities established in the early imperial period remained the fundamental units of social organisation in Gaul until the late sixth century and beyond. The church had again contributed significantly to this development by adopting the secular administrative framework wholesale, reinforcing the existing links between the city and its dependent territory and focussing them on a new and potent figure-head in the person of the bishop.¹⁶ In the secular sphere, meanwhile, the basic division of Gaul into a series of city-territories had not only endured, but, as we shall see, had acquired renewed importance following the disintegration of Roman authority. In late fifth- and sixth century sources, a city such as Clermont consistently appears in the sources as the hub around which life in its dependent territory revolves. It is an administrative centre for the mustering of armies, collection of taxes, and the public posting of claims of title to land, a redoubt on which the military and spiritual security of the Auvergne depends, and the focus of a liturgical round stretching out far beyond the saints in its suburban cemeteries to embrace the tomb of Julian, some 60 kms across the city-territory in Brioude.¹⁷ Clermont's civic institutions, not to mention its role in local or regional exchange-networks, are lost in mists every bit as impenetrable as the fog which had once obscured King Childebert's view of the delightful countryside round about, but there is no mistaking the enduringly competitive machinations of the local aristocracy, whose jockeying for position is now largely visible within a

¹⁵ Greg. Tur. Hist. 1.33 (p. 25); Vieillard-Troiekouroff 1976, 85–104; Prévot 1989.

¹⁶ Heinzelmann 1988; Harries 1992; Beaujard 1996; Rebillard/Sotinel 1998; Gauthier 2000.

¹⁷ Army: Greg. Tur. Hist. 2.37 (p. 88); 4.30 (p. 162). Tax: Hist. 10.7 (p. 488). Posting of claims to land: Formul. Arvern. 1 (p. 28). Defence: e.g. Sidon. Epist. 3.2 (p. 40); 3.3 (p. 41f.); 3.7 (p. 45); 7.1 (p. 103f.); 7.7 (p. 110f.), with Harries 1994, 222ff. for context; Greg. Tur. Hist. 3.9 (p. 106); 3.12f. (p. 108f.); 4.5 (p. 138) etc. Liturgical round: Greg. Tur. Vit. Patr. 6.6 (p. 234); Hist. 4.13 (p. 144f.); cf. Van Dam 1993, 41ff.

Christian context.¹⁸ Now that the prospects of preferment in imperial service had disappeared, the renewed vitality of traditional civic politics is marked by their patronage of rival saints' cults, or by the tension surrounding every episcopal succession in Clermont. Local power may have leached away to some degree from the classical organs of civic administration to the persons of bishop and count, but it retained its urban focus, and the territorial framework within which it operated was very largely the same. The classical concept of the city-territory remained central to Gregory of Tours' conception of his world; for him Clermont and the Auvergne were synonymous.¹⁹

It has already been noted that there is no such thing as a typical late antique Gallic city, but Clermont is demonstrably unusual only in the extent of its wall-circuit, which is particularly exiguous. Otherwise, its main distinguishing feature is the availability of a comparative wealth of textual evidence. There is no necessary reason to assume, for example, that Clermont's churches were anomalously numerous, since the few cities for which we possess comparably detailed early medieval documentation suggest similarly high levels of ecclesiastical building activity.²⁰ Similarly, it is clear that competition for local office continued to exist in other Gallic cities, but usually we lack the succession of anecdotes required to reconstruct the pursuit of power at the level of the city-territory by aristocratic families over several generations. But although the blend of evidence from Clermont is particularly rich and full, many a Gallic city offers at least a flavour of the three phenomena outlined above.

Thus far, in order to give some brief sense of their interaction within a single community, I have dwelt upon a single case-study. Now it is necessary to disentangle these strands again, leaving largely to one side the crucially important issue of the Christian reconfiguration of urban society and topography, since this is a development which is fully explored in Jean GUYON's paper in this volume. Any separation of this kind is necessarily artificial and incomplete; it would be inappropriate to ignore the impact of the church on cities altogether, not least because it was indisputably positive. It can nevertheless be argued that the very success of the redefinition of the city as a Christian space, which reaches its apogee in the late sixth century in the writings of Gregory of Tours, in itself creates a problem. By introducing a new and increasingly dominant element into the urban equation it cuts across the other major trends of the period, and makes it harder to compare the late antique city directly with its early imperial predecessor. In what follows, therefore, the emphasis lies instead upon two frameworks

¹⁸ Fog: Greg. Tur. Hist. 3.9 (p. 106). For local aristocratic competition see e.g. Hist. 4.35 (p. 167f.) and 4.39 (p. 170f.), with Wood I.N. 1983. It remained fierce in the seventh and early eighth centuries.

¹⁹ E.g. within Greg. Tur. Hist. 4.16 (p. 147f.). It is sometimes the case that it can only be inferred from the context whether Gregory is using *civitas* to refer specifically to a city or to an entire city-territory.

²⁰ E.g. at Le Mans (over 20 churches in the early seventh century), Metz (over 40 by the mid-eighth), and Auxerre (29 at the end of the seventh). These numbers of churches should probably be regarded as normal; the exception lies rather in the survival of sufficiently detailed sources for their existence.

within which such a comparison might be achievable: on the one hand, the qualitative and quantitative deterioration in the scale and character of urban settlement, on the other, the reaffirmation of the *civitas* as the defining Gallic administrative and social unit. These apparently contradictory trends might be identified, if only in the crudest of terms, with the abstractions 'decline' and 'change' which offer rival paradigms for the urban history of late Antiquity.

Cities in late antique Gaul came under the same administrative and financial stresses and strains as those elsewhere in the western empire. There is no need here to rehearse in detail such widespread and well-known developments as the tightening-up of central control over urban government and finances, the dwindling attractions of curial office-holding against those of a post in the imperial service, or the disappearance of the voluntary expenditure on public amenities which had been so instrumental in shaping the landscape and the character of the classical city.²¹ All these developments can be said to have contributed to the decline of a certain style of urbanism which was indubitably impressive and which, both then and now, has customarily been idealised. The archaeological symptoms of this change have been turned up, to a greater or lesser extent, at cities more or less throughout Gaul. Several of them will be illustrated incidentally in the following paragraphs, but they are worth listing quickly here if only to bring out their cumulative weight. Public buildings are stripped out or left to moulder more gradually away, private housing is of inferior technical quality, and built to more basic specifications, and the sophisticated water-supply and sewage-disposal systems of earlier periods are inadequately maintained and eventually abandoned. More generally, the coherent and controlled urban landscapes of earlier periods progressively disintegrate: built-up areas give way to derelict wasteland, the boundaries between public and private space are deregulated, and urban space contracts or, often, fragments into a series of disaggregated elements.²² This bleak litany of dereliction is, needless to say, at once composite and partial. First, it conflates developments which were taking place across two or three centuries, and which differ significantly in their causes and implications. Secondly, it ignores the parallel emergence of a new late antique urbanism, structured around walls and churches. But it is indisputable that during late Antiquity cities all over Gaul were tending to become both smaller and, in various respects, simpler.

The archaeological evidence is of crucial importance in this regard, because the surviving written sources from fourth- and fifth-century Gaul afford disappointingly little explicit recognition, be it general or specific, of these developments. By definition, the withering away of traditional patterns of monumental investment has to be deduced primarily from the disappearance of the inscriptions in which it had been lovingly commemorated.²³ When fourth- and fifth-century Gallic authors do fleetingly offer direct comments on urban life, they

²¹ Jones 1964, 712–766; Liebeschuetz 1992; 2001; Ward-Perkins 1998.

²² Février 1974; Rich 1992; Potter 1995; Christie/Loseby 1996; Lepelley 1996; Brogiolo/Ward-Perkins 1999; Lavan 2001.

²³ Ward-Perkins 1984; Witschel, this volume.

tend, for the most part, to adopt one of two registers: paeans of more or less conventional praise, or urgent laments that everything around them is going up in smoke.²⁴ Not unusually, the archaeological evidence exposes the intrinsically rhetorical nature of many of these observations by revealing, for the most part, neither the maintenance of ancient splendour nor sudden destruction on a massive scale: for most Gallic cities the late antique transition was gradual, and involved something in between. Some incidental textual references look potentially more meaningful, but their real significance can be hard to determine. For example, Sidonius famously noted that some of his contemporaries were choosing to spend more time with their estates instead of coming to town, but there are obvious dangers in reading this as an epitaph for aristocratic involvement in civic life *tout court*, as opposed to a considered response to the particularly febrile political situation of the 460s and 470s.²⁵ Similarly, the canons of subsequent church councils which require the attendance of the elite upon the bishop in his city on the occasion of major religious festivals probably tell us more about the determination of the episcopate to limit any devolution of spiritual authority to rural estate-centres than about an aristocratic flight from the towns.²⁶

Occasionally, however, even the most ostensibly conventional of written sources bears an emphasis which the archaeology brings out with renewed force. In the celebration of his native Bordeaux which brings his *Catalogue of Famous Cities* to its patriotic climax, Ausonius reserves his praise for the city-walls and the port within them, and mentions a solitary urban monument, the fountain of Divona, to the exclusion of all others.²⁷ His rhetoric is closely adapted to fourth-century reality [fig. 1]. The ramparts of Bordeaux, probably erected around the turn of the third century, were relatively expansive by the standards of many a late antique Gallic wall-circuit; they enclosed some 31 hectares, over ten times the intra-mural area of Clermont.²⁸ Not surprisingly, Ausonius was at pains to stress their strictly orthogonal layout and imposingly monumental aspect.²⁹ His evocation of towers soaring to the clouds may be an obvious literary conceit, but this was a prestige architectural project, and it would have been seen as such for miles around across the featureless horizons of the Garonne estuary. His emphasis on the port is also faithful to the intentions of the wall's architects; an interior harbour established around the mouth of the Devèze estuary served as the unmistakable focus for the late antique walled area.³⁰

²⁴ E.g. Sidon. Carm. 23.32ff. (p.251) of Narbonne; Salv. Gub. 6.39f. (p. 388f.); 6.72 (p. 408f.).

²⁵ E.g. Sidon. Epist. 1.6 (p. 9); 4.21 (p.71 f.); 5.14 (p. 87f.); 5.20 (p. 92f.); 8.8 (p. 134).

²⁶ Conc. Aurel. a. 511, c. 25 (p. 11); Conc. Epaon. a. 517, c. 35 (p. 33); Conc. Arvern. a. 535, c. 15 (p. 109); Conc. Aurel. a. 541, c. 3 (p.132f.).

²⁷ Auson. Ordo Urbium Nobilium 128–168 (p.194f.). Cf. Paul. Pell. Euch. 42–47 (p.60).

²⁸ Barraud/Linères/Maurin 1996.

²⁹ Ordo 140–144 (p.194): *quadrua murorum species, sic turribus altis / ardua ut aerias intrent fastigia nubes. / distinctas interne vias mirere, domorum / dispositum et latus nomen servare plateas. / tum respondentem directa in compita portas.*

³⁰ Ordo 145–147 (p.195): *per mediumque urbis fontani fluminis alveum; / quem pater Oceanus refluxo cum impleverit aestu, / adlabi totum spectabis classibus aequor.* Cf. Barraud/Linères/Maurin 1996, 32f.

the city's cemeteries, in a strikingly unsentimental acknowledgement of their redundancy.³² Such clearances were neither complete, nor indiscriminate; other major monuments were left to crumble away much more gradually right down to modern times, such as the enigmatic Piliers de la Tutelle and the amphitheatre known to posterity as the Palais Galien. There is no way of knowing whether such structures remained functioning elements of the fourth-century urban landscape, or whether they simply entered into their protracted half-life as monumental dinosaurs from a bygone age at around the time when the city was fortified. Settlement was certainly not confined to the intra-mural area, but the density and character of late antique occupation outside the walls is at present difficult to assess.³³ But regardless of these inevitable gaps in our understanding, the conscious decision to omit the former heart of the city from the walled area clearly represents a fundamental ideological shift. Ausonius was quite capable of making the best of this new-style urbanism in celebrating his *patria*, but his complaints elsewhere about the overcrowded city-streets reflect one of the associated inconveniences of intra-mural life; these too find some archaeological support in the form of evidence for an intensification of settlement within the walled area, though there was still room for some town-houses of a more expansive nature as well.³⁴ After all, in late Antiquity Bordeaux had probably acquired unprecedented importance in the imperial scheme of things. But it was simultaneously a more confined city which had assumed a new and significantly different monumental identity.

City-walls are, together with churches, by far the best-attested category of late antique public building in Gaul, and, as the example of Bordeaux has shown, the most visible – and rhetorically recognised – assertions of the new style of urbanism. As we have seen, these so-called *enceintes réduites* typically enclose only a fraction of the urban areas of earlier centuries. They lend themselves more readily to comparative analysis than other aspects of the late antique Gallic urban experience, and various efforts have accordingly been made to catalogue them, to rank them by numbers of hectares enclosed, and to assess their broader social significance, frequently within a notional context of 'decline'.³⁵ Even so, our knowledge of any individual circuit is invariably imperfect; more significantly, the ambiguities surrounding the purpose, chronology, and organisation of their construction enable the category as a whole to stand firm against easy synthesis, and complicate any interpretation of the general relationship between defences and urban settlement.

³² It has been estimated that no less than 64,000 m³ of *spolia* were systematically re-used in the foundations of the new rampart: Garny/Maurin 1996, 191f. In the mid-fourth century the desecration of cemeteries for building purposes was forbidden by law: Cod. Theod. 9.17.2–4 (p. 464f.).

³³ Barraud/Maurin 1996.

³⁴ Auson. Epist. 4.19–28 (p. 218f.); 24.82f. (p. 258). Cf. Balmelle 1992; Barraud/Maurin 1996, 41f.

³⁵ Blanchet 1907; Lot 1946–53; Butler 1959; Johnson 1983b, 82–115. The more sophisticated analysis in Maurin 1992 is highly suggestive, but concerns itself only with Aquitaine.

These various problems overlap, but it is perhaps useful to consider each of them briefly in turn. On legal, financial (and sometimes technical) grounds we can be broadly confident that the initiative behind the erection of city-walls, not to mention the necessary authorisation for any associated clearances, came primarily from central government.³⁶ However, this does not exclude the possibility that cities themselves contributed to the expense, or that they might have petitioned to get them built. More problematically, the mechanics of the decision-making process elude us entirely, as does the extent to which any local consultation took place. This begs a number of crucial questions. Did the inhabitants of Bordeaux recognise the redundancy of much of the existing monumental landscape, for example, or was it imposed upon them from above, perhaps as the result of an imperial determination to secure the harbour which necessitated the exclusion of other functioning urban facilities? Were the people of Clermont grateful for their tiny enceinte, or depressed that imperial surveyors did not see fit to make it more expansive? We cannot tell.

The question of motive looks more straightforward. I am aware of no Gallic source which expresses the two basic imperatives involved in wall-building quite as succinctly as the Italian Cassiodorus – “an adornment in times of peace, a precaution in time of war” – but the same dialectic between pragmatic and symbolic considerations can be seen to apply throughout Gaul.³⁷ The defensive function of such ramparts, essentially to deter or detain attackers who are usually more interested in booty as well as ill-equipped in various ways for siege warfare, is overwhelmingly obvious. An abundance of fifth- and sixth-century anecdotes from Gaul confirm that walls did generally fulfil this role effectively, or would do so at least as long as they were adequately maintained and their defenders could be trusted. But they were not exclusively functional. In a period where other aspects of the urban aesthetic seem to have been losing their appeal, a desire to keep up appearances is perceptible both in the overall layout of circuits, as at Bordeaux, and in details such as the provision of ornate monumental gates like the Porte de Mars at Périgueux, or the patterns picked out in brick which still enliven the surviving facings of the circuit at Le Mans.³⁸ And city-walls, as always, carried more general symbolic meanings. In early imperial Gaul they had been rare; barely a sixth of cities had them, and they tended to be redolent of formal colonial status.³⁹ When wall-circuits began to proliferate in late Antiquity, at a time when other monumental signifiers were disappearing from the landscape, they came increasingly to stand, as has already been noted, for urbanism itself. In his famous description of the qualities of Dijon, Gregory of Tours makes much of its walls and their imperial origins, though he does so precisely because it was not technically a city, and he was striving to assert its urban credentials;

³⁶ E.g. CIL XII 2229, recording the construction of the walls of Grenoble at Diocletian's and Maximian's expense.

³⁷ Cassiod. Var. I.28.1 (p. 29f.): *et ornatus pacis ... et bellorum necessitas*.

³⁸ Porte de Mars: Girardy-Caillat 1996, 145f.; it is worth noting that the city's other gates were more functional in character. Le Mans: Biarne/Guilleux 1980.

³⁹ Summary in Goudineau 1980, 244–261.

here again one might compare the attitude of Cassiodorus, who jocularly identified a city without walls as a category mistake.⁴⁰ Contemporaries knew full well that these associations were imperfect. Not all walled settlements in Gaul were cities, though their defences, as in the case of Dijon, might be every bit as imposing. Perhaps more surprisingly, it is likely that even in Gregory's day some cities still remained undefended.⁴¹ But the symbolic value routinely ascribed to urban fortifications is just as apparent as their practical utility in times of crisis.

Although all wall-circuits were probably built with regard to defence first and decoration second, the priority given to these imperatives will have varied from case to case, and surely depended to a significant degree upon the specific context in which they were erected. The assumption that all such circuits were hastily thrown up in a panicked response to the invasions which had penetrated deep into Gaul in the third century has mercifully been abandoned. Attempts to group defences by their layouts and construction methods into provincial programmes of fortification have met with partial success, but run some risk of circularity when their application proceeds from the few well-dated and clearly-attested examples to take in the less well-known specimens.⁴² Meanwhile, the slow but steady increase in the availability of reliable archaeological criteria for the dating of individual circuits has tended instead to indicate a more evolutionary pattern for their emergence, originating in the later third century, as had long been assumed, but extending on through the fourth into the fifth century, and probably beyond.⁴³ It should also be remembered that while many circuits seem to be the product of a single building campaign, the provision of defences was a major financial and logistical undertaking which, like many an ambitious military or ecclesiastical building project in the Middle Ages, could be overtaken by events, or rolled out in stages over several decades. Tours, for example, was protected initially by a ditch and bank, and it was not until around the 370s that its defences were finally consolidated by the erection of a continuous stone wall.⁴⁴ When Julian's forces prepared to hold Sens against the Alemanni in 356, they had to start by strengthening an insecure section of the walls, perhaps because they had been left similarly incomplete.⁴⁵ And if we take into account those few cities

⁴⁰ Greg. Tur. Hist. 3.19 (p. 120f.), with Picard 1984 and Loseby 1998b, 242f. Cassiod. Var. 12.15.5 (p. 373) notes that the absence of walls at Squillac in Bruttium could lead it to be considered with equal justification as a rural city or an urban villa.

⁴¹ In Narbonensis, in particular, where several (but by no means all) cities were already walled, reduced enceintes of demonstrably late antique date are certainly rare, though not, as was once suggested, absent altogether: see Février 1974, 82, with Heijmans 1999, 158f. Some cities in late antique Aquitaine probably also remained unwalled: Maurin 1992, 377f.

⁴² Johnson 1983a.

⁴³ Maurin 1992. The walls of Cahors were restored and apparently extended by Bishop Desiderius in the seventh century as one of his many building projects: Vita S. Desiderii 16f. (p. 574f.), with Durliat 1979. The tendency of our sources to exaggerate such works is well known, but once we accept that not all cities were necessarily walled in the Roman period, there is certainly scope for the provision as well as the renewal of wall-circuits after the fifth century.

⁴⁴ Wood J. 1983.

⁴⁵ Amm. 16.4.2 (p. 72): *clausa ergo urbe murorumque intuta parte firmata*.

which were walled prior to the mid-third century, when a more extravagant approach was the norm, the range of late antique defensive possibilities is extended further. Some existing defences were simply maintained or embellished. The early imperial circuit at Toulouse, for example, was completed, probably in the fourth century, by the addition of a wall on the open side facing the Garonne, while the Hellenistic walls of Marseille were reinforced, at least in part, by the addition of a fore-wall in the mid-fifth century.⁴⁶ The simple provision of a smaller late antique circuit, seemingly the most obvious option in cities which were already walled, is surprisingly rare, although Tongeren, where the late antique circuit of 45–50 ha took in only about a third of its second-century predecessor, offers one example of a genuinely reduced enceinte.⁴⁷ At Autun or Trier, by contrast, there is no sign of any late antique attempt to establish a smaller defensive perimeter, although their vast early imperial enceintes must at some stage have become hopelessly ill-suited to effective defence.⁴⁸

The result of this long history of fortification, stretching from the late first century BC through to at least the fifth century AD, is a variegated pattern, which is inadequately conveyed in those bald declensions of fortified areas, descending from the 285 ha expanse of Trier down to the 3 ha of Clermont and beyond, that figure prominently in most discussions of late antique Gallic urbanism. These various circuits may all have been invested with similar symbolic capital, though there are a few indications that contemporaries may have been self-deprecatingly aware of the relative 'littleness' of their communities.⁴⁹ At the functional level, however, they will have imposed totally different demands in terms of defensive strategy or routine maintenance. More importantly, the extent of walled areas cannot be uncritically deployed as either a ranking index of the relative importance of the communities which they served or as a reliable indication of the contemporary extent of settlement. In the former case, each circuit was the product of the variables outlined above. It makes a significant difference, for example, whether a wall-circuit was erected in a climate of urban renewal, with the benefit of substantial imperial funds, or whether it emerged in a less favourable political context to meet pressing defensive needs, perhaps backed by limited logistical and financial support. Secondly, beyond the broadly identifiable defensive and symbolic imperatives, the question acutely posed over fifty years ago by Michel ROBLIN as to whether such circuits were intended to protect entire communities or to act as defensible strongholds – *cités ou citadelles?* – admits of no

⁴⁶ Toulouse: Archéologie Toulousaine 1995, 27ff. Marseille: Bonifay 2001. It should however be noted that both of these cities were doing comparatively well in late Antiquity: Guyon 2000; Loseby 1992.

⁴⁷ Vanderhoeven et al. 2002, 83f.; Raepsaet-Charlier/Vanderhoeven 2004.

⁴⁸ The walls of Trier encompassed 285 ha, those of Autun all but 200 ha; the late seventh-century 'restoration' of the latter (Passio S. Leudegarii I 2 [p. 285]) presumably exploited only a fraction of the circuit.

⁴⁹ Sidon. Epist. 3.1.2 (p. 39), describes Clermont as a *municipiolum*. Bishop Constantius of Albi uses *civitacula* to describe his similarly cramped city in writing to Desiderius of Cahors: Desiderius, Epist. 2.15 (p. 211).

consistent answer.⁵⁰ At Paris, famously, extensive settlement continued throughout the early Middle Ages across the Seine from the 9 hectares of the Ile de la Cité, which had been fortified at some point after 308.⁵¹ At Tours, on the other hand, where the late antique rampart enclosed a very similar area, meticulous excavation has yielded very little sign of fourth-century suburban occupation; the walled area at this date seems commensurate with the extent of contemporary settlement.⁵² The dangers of making assumptions about cities on the basis of walled area alone are further exposed if we bear in mind that some centres with extensive enceintes bequeathed from earlier periods, such as Metz or Marseille, exhibit significant evidence of extra-mural occupation, probably in conjunction with the gradual abandonment of part of the walled area.⁵³ At Lyon, meanwhile, the focus of activity had gravitated down from the defended Fourvière hill to the banks of the Saône and Rhône in the third century, and there is no good evidence to suggest that any part of the riverside settlement was defended. Instead, the late antique city appears to have consisted of a series of disjointed clusters of occupation, undermining the entire concept of urban area.⁵⁴

Such a range of possibilities makes it unwise to make any assumptions about the nature and extent of suburban – or indeed urban – settlement in the many cases where clear and substantial evidence of late antique occupation does not as yet exist. It has rightly been observed that the very existence of walls around previously unfortified centres must have “decisively influenced the psychological climate within the city”.⁵⁵ Even so, the precise impact of city-walls on the mental space of the inhabitants – from the confines of Clermont through the relative capaciousness of Bordeaux to the wide open expanses of Trier – must have been conditioned by their extent, and have varied considerably from case to case. One might hypothesise that, when present, walls will generally have had a centripetal effect, in the medium term at least, so that even if they did not correspond to the extent of occupation at the time they were built, they exercised a significant influence over its subsequent development. But the correlation between walled area and settlement is by no means axiomatic, and we should also bear in mind the significant counter-attraction exercised by the saints in the suburbs, which ensured that the routines of urban life could never be exclusively contained within the walls, and might eventually lead to the formation of alternative cores of settlement around major churches, as was the case at Tours or Limoges.

The meaning of any wall-circuit must therefore be evaluated in relation to what can be discerned of the contemporary settlement pattern in any given city. In some cases, this reinforces the impression that city-walls are only the most

⁵⁰ Roblin 1951; 1965.

⁵¹ Périn 1996: The rampart destroyed a wooden structure dated dendrochronologically to 308. There was probably also a secondary fortification around the forum on the south bank.

⁵² Galinié 1997, 68f.

⁵³ Metz: Halsall 1996. Marseille: Loseby 1992; Bouiron 2001, 323f.

⁵⁴ Reynaud 1998, esp. 186ff.

⁵⁵ Bullough 1974, 352.

inescapable statements of the prevalence of a new conception of urbanism which might entail the decommissioning of much of the existing public landscape. These changing expectations of urban life have already been observed at Ausonius' Bordeaux, but are manifested more explicitly at a more average centre like Périgueux, where an elliptical wall-circuit was erected, probably in the course of the fourth century, on the northern periphery of the city of earlier centuries [fig. 2].⁵⁶ Its layout was clearly influenced, as in other cities, by a desire to incorporate the existing amphitheatre as a colossal defensive bastion. The walls are impressively grandiose in execution, but not in extent: the decision was taken to enclose only 5.5 hectares, omitting the forum complex, the massive tower of Vesunna, and some fine town-houses, or in all around nine-tenths of the early imperial city. The heart of the ancient layout, which was fully developed only in the second century, seems to have been widely abandoned, leaving it to become an excellent source of building materials. In the Merovingian period a cemetery was finally installed amid its ruins, immediately west of the old forum. Here the late antique transition to a new and more utilitarian conception of urbanism seems more or less clear-cut.

It is always difficult, however, to establish the precise chronological relationship between the appearance of city-walls and the abandonment of extra-mural areas, especially since the configuration of settlements was changing regardless of whether walls were built or not. In the early imperial period Aix-en-Provence, the first Roman colony in Gaul, was something of a garden city, sheltering sundry fine town-houses as well as the usual array of monuments within its extensive ramparts. But it was already past its best before the end of the second century, and subsequent decades saw the steady disaggregation of the urban space of earlier periods. By the fifth century, Aix had become a classic *città ad isole*, featuring pockets of settlement, in some cases centred on churches – such as the cathedral complex which was built directly upon the ancient forum-basilica [see below Guyon, fig. 3] – amid a landscape which had been progressively ruralised.⁵⁷ Though the early imperial walls were no longer maintained, there is no convincing evidence here of a late antique reduced enceinte to give some focus to settlement. On paper, the status of Aix had been enhanced by its elevation to the status of a provincial capital in the fourth century. In practice, as in the parallel case of Tours, this had no discernible impact upon its appearance, and did nothing to reverse a change in the extent and the character of settlement which had already been under way for the best part of two centuries. Unlike Tours, however, Aix did not consolidate behind a rampart; instead, like Lyon, it splintered into fragments.

At nearby Arles, the late antique transition was more subtle and complex [see below Guyon, fig. 2]. Ausonius' "little Rome of Gaul" had always been something of an establishment city, and it enjoyed a particular ideological association with the house of Constantine.⁵⁸ As such, it was insulated to some extent from the

⁵⁶ Girardy-Caillet 1996.

⁵⁷ Guyon et al. 1998, with Guild/Guyon/Rivet 1980; 1983 for the cathedral excavations.

⁵⁸ Auson, *Ordo Urbium Nobilium* 74 (p. 191); cf. Loseby 1996, 49f.

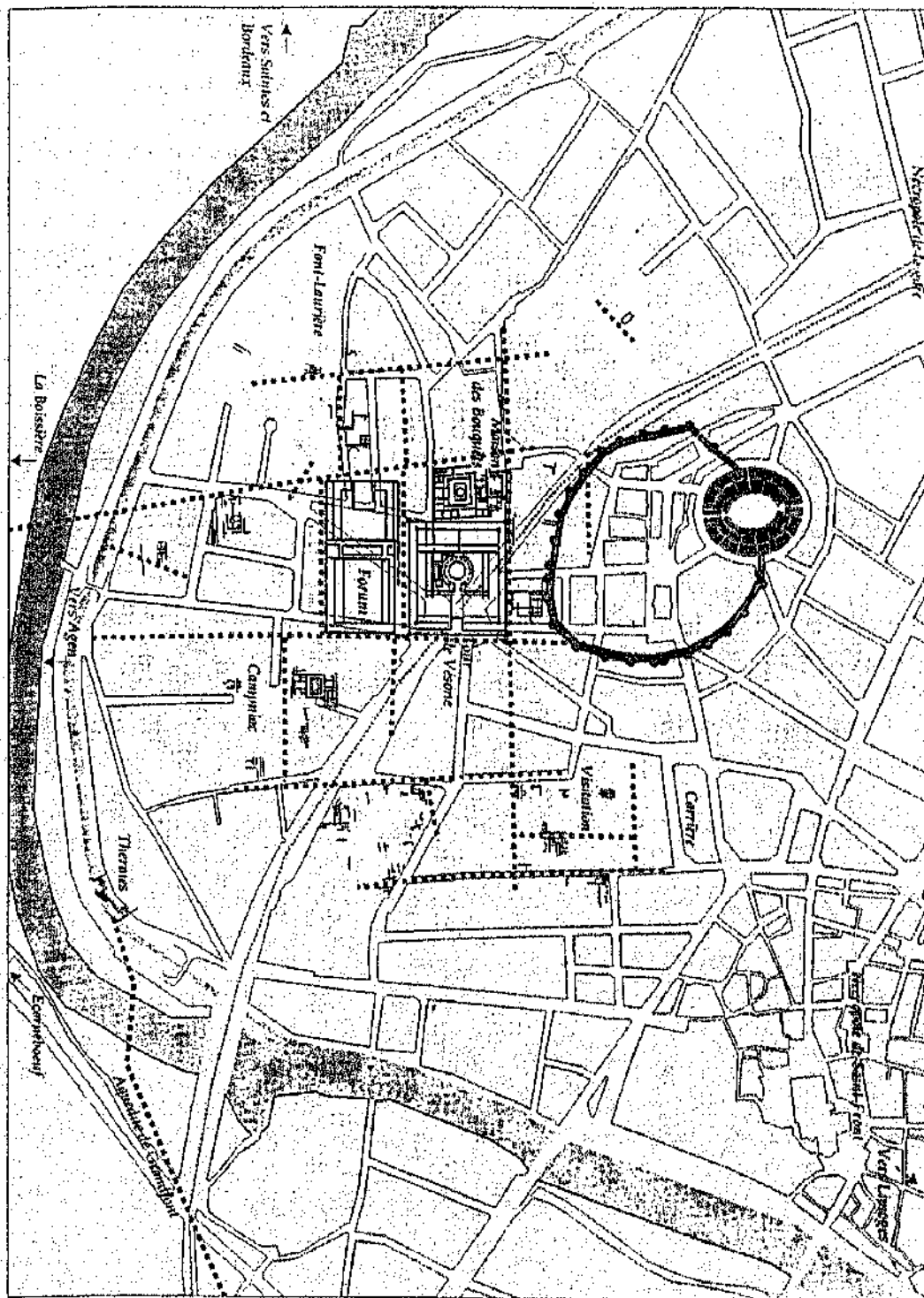


fig. 2: The siting of the late antique wall-circuit in relation to earlier settlement at Périgueux (after C.Girardy-Caillat/J.-F.Pichonneau, in: Blanchard-Lemée/Maurin/Prévot 1998, 99).

contemporary downturn in urban investment, and recent excavations have confirmed how it benefited from a new wave of imperially-sponsored public building.⁵⁹ But although the monumental centre of the city was being remodelled in the fourth century, the series of rich town-houses located to the south of the city and across the Rhône in Trinquetaille seem largely to have remained derelict after their destruction in the course of the third century.⁶⁰ And even as the city reached its political apogee with the transfer of the Gallic prefecture from Trier soon after 395, its public landscape started to undergo a creeping transformation which saw the erection of private housing in and around several of its public buildings and spaces.⁶¹ The regular disposition of simple occupation units around the vast perimeter of the circus, which almost certainly remained in use, confirms that these do not represent the breakdown of urban order, but should be seen as part of an ordered programme of planning deregulation. Such initiatives represent low-cost housing developments, not parasitic or squatter occupation, but they reveal the emergence of a new urban aesthetic, and, in keeping with contemporary imperial legislation, they take advantage of monumental redundancy where possible.⁶² Meanwhile, some of the inhabitants of Arles, whose wealth is reflected in the city's rich collection of sarcophagi, will simultaneously have been sponsoring the new churches springing up alongside these colonised monuments to forgotten social priorities. Huddled behind its frequently-tested defences, which had probably been reduced in extent at about this time, fifth-century Arles already anticipates some of the characteristics of medieval urbanism.⁶³

Arles is unusual among Gallic cities in providing evidence for both secular monumental investment in late Antiquity, and for the need to accommodate a resident fifth-century population, and it should be remembered that it was a particularly significant city. The radical revision of routine expectations of urbanism which had taken place before the fifth century is perhaps better epitomised by several centres in the newly-created province of Novempopulana, in south-western Gaul, which were raised to the status of *civitas*-capitals at some point prior to the drawing up of the *Notitia Galliarum* in the years around 400.⁶⁴ Several of these appear to be mere hilltop fortifications, all of 7 hectares or fewer, and as yet offer no archaeological indications that they were ever endowed with any of the monumental trappings of classical urbanism, though they all went on to become episcopal sees [see below Guyon, fig. 8]. In many ways, they seem more reminiscent of what one might expect to find in the Justinianic Balkans than in the foothills of the Pyrenees. The few cities already established in this region in

⁵⁹ Heijmans 1999, 144ff.

⁶⁰ Heijmans 1996. Despite this marked decline in occupation on the west bank of the Rhône, Ausonius still preferred to qualify late antique Arles as *duplex*: *Ordo Urbium Nobilium* 73 (p. 191); *Epist.* 24.73 (p. 258).

⁶¹ Transfer: Palanque 1973. Re-use of public buildings and spaces: Sintès 1994, Heijmans 1999, 159–62.

⁶² Janvier 1969.

⁶³ See Heijmans 1999, 158f., for the likely contraction of the enceinte in the fifth century.

⁶⁴ Maurin 1992, 384ff.; Souilhac 1996; Esmonde Cleary 2004.

the early imperial period did retain something of their earlier character, as is shown at St-Bertrand-de-Comminges by the continued occupation of parts of the 'lower town' even after the fortification of the adjacent hilltop, now well-dated to the early fifth century [see below Guyon, figs. 5–6].⁶⁵ But the cluster of newly-minted cities in its vicinity emphasise with particular clarity how, by the decades around 400, the minimum requirements of Gallo-Roman urbanism had changed to revolve around walls, the bishops within them, and the saints outside. The landscapes of some established centres like St-Bertrand and, it has been plausibly suggested, the likes of Clermont, were being reshaped in accordance with these more rudimentary conceptions of urban amenity.⁶⁶

The development of late antique urbanism in Gaul conforms to patterns which can be observed sooner or later in many regions of the empire, and which are characterised by such developments as the contraction or disintegration of areas in occupation, the dereliction or adaptation of existing public buildings and amenities; the blurring of the boundaries between private and public space, and a new emphasis on fortification both in practice, and as a cornerstone of urban rhetoric. Even so, it can be argued that in Gaul some of these general trends were manifested precociously and with particular intensity. They were emerging in several centres, such as Aix or Périgueux, before the end of the Antonine age, and were affecting every city in Gaul to a significant degree by the fourth century. Although these developments can only have been exacerbated by the prolonged political upheavals of the third century and the associated restructuring of the Roman state, it is clear that these were not the only catalysts for change. Similarly, the widespread adoption of a more utilitarian conception of urban form was already well advanced long before the disintegration of Roman Gaul which followed inexorably upon the collapse of the Rhine frontier at the beginning of the fifth century. The heyday of classical urbanism in Gaul was the product of a political and social framework which was not thoroughly established before the early second century, and was already proving difficult to sustain before its end. As such, it was short-lived by comparison with the late antique transition which followed.

The radical transformation of urban form which took place in late Antiquity did not mean that Gallic cities had outlived their usefulness. On the contrary, it did much to equip the vast majority of them to endure as centres of their dependent territories into the days of Gregory of Tours and beyond.⁶⁷ The greatest fifth- and sixth century disruptions to the Roman urban network took place around the fringes of what eventually became, for the most part, Frankish Gaul, whether in the far north-east of *Belgica Secunda*, or, more fundamentally, in the Wild West of the Breton peninsula; somewhat later, a further series of dislocations would occur down in *Novempopulana*, although many of the tiny fortress-

⁶⁵ Walls: Jones/Esmonde Cleary/Wood 1998. Occupation: Collectif 2001/02.

⁶⁶ Maurin 1992 offers convincing stylistic arguments for an early fifth-century date for the Clermont circuit, which would help to explain some of its particularities.

⁶⁷ Loseby 1998b; Gauthier 1997; 2002.

cities here were in any case relatively recent creations, as we have seen.⁶⁸ Across the heart of Gaul, however, a great swathe of city-territories remained functioning territorial units, including in excess of a hundred of the *civitates* listed in the *Notitia Galliarum*. Hardly any of its cities disappeared outright, in the sense that their territory was absorbed into that of a neighbouring centre.⁶⁹ Occasionally, existing city-territories were subdivided to create new cities, usually in response to specific political or pastoral circumstances, or the capital of a *civitas* was transferred from one centre to another within the existing territorial framework. But such changes remained few in number throughout the political reconfigurations of the fifth and sixth centuries, and they were essentially evolutionary in character. Indeed, they were entirely consistent with the long-term development of a Gallic urban network which, taken in the round, had remained remarkably stable since its establishment in the age of Augustus.

This post-imperial stability could be dismissed as nothing more than a form of inertia, reinforced by the powerful and conservative institutional influence of the church. The modelling of the ecclesiastical administrative hierarchy on the secular organisation of the Roman empire preserved the footprint of the *civitas*-system long after the imperial superstructure had disappeared, and in so doing provided our clearest markers of urban status in the persons of its bishops. But the substantial contribution of the church to this pattern of continuity should not blind us to the various ways in which cities in both the Frankish and Visigothic successor-states also continued to serve as the vital organs of secular administration in Gaul. To some extent, this necessitated nothing more than the retention of established Roman systems of government, as far as was possible, by the new rulers. However, it also involved the elaboration of new procedures better suited to the changing needs of their polities, and it is telling that these too were generally structured around the existing network of cities and their dependent territories.

The most vivid illustrations of these developments come from the works of Gregory of Tours, a prolific source of vignettes of late sixth-century urban life.⁷⁰ They need to be read with some caution, as will become apparent, but Gregory unequivocally shows how city-territories were the basic units through which political as well as ecclesiastical power was exercised in the Gaul of his day. Although the concept of the province persisted within the organisation of the church in the person of the metropolitan bishop, the upper tiers of the Roman administrative framework had by then disappeared from the secular sphere, and were yet to be replaced on any regular or permanent basis.⁷¹ Across much of Gaul, instead, the routine machinery of government was devolved directly from

⁶⁸ Belgica: Verhaege 1990. Brittany: Bernier 1984. For the fate of the Roman urban network in Gaul more generally, see Loseby 2000; Beaujard/Prévot 2004.

⁶⁹ Jublains, Castellane, and the enigmatic *civitas Boatium* in the Gironde: Loseby 2000, 82f.

⁷⁰ Cf. Breukelaar 1994, 198f., for the urban identity of the *Histoires*, though it should be emphasised that Gregory saw cities and their territories as entities.

⁷¹ For the demise of the *provinciae* and the nascent appearance of *regiones*, see Rouche 1997.

the royal court down to the cities, with no intervening layers of administration. The Merovingian polity was frequently divided among several rulers, whose kingdoms were constructed from the aggregation of individual *civitates*. These building-blocks were sometimes combined to create continuous territorial entities, but they could equally be distributed without any necessary regard for geographical integrity. The details of these complex and fluid arrangements are often elusive, but in the sixth century they were conceived around the supposedly equitable distribution of resources between rulers (or, potentially, their wives and children), not the formation of coherent *Teilreiche*.⁷² The text of the one extant sixth-century royal treaty, concluded at Andelot in 587, contains several clauses dealing with the precise attribution of specific cities, whilst simultaneously reaffirming the right of free passage between kingdoms. Without it, travel across much of Gaul could be made impossible.⁷³

The logic behind these divisions was not primarily territorial, therefore, but fiscal. In the sixth century tax was still the most important resource which kings were able to acquire through cities.⁷⁴ The Roman empire had always organised the extraction of resources from the countryside through the *civitas*, so in this regard the dissolution of the imperial administrative superstructure made little difference. In striving to maintain the Roman system as best they could, however, the Merovingian kings faced resistance from two formidable interest-groups, the Franks and the church, whose unholy alliance eventually made tax-collection more troublesome than it was worth. Gregory of Tours reserves much righteous indignation for royal efforts to tax, and shows little sympathy for hapless officials lynched by militant Franks or tormented by vengeful saints.⁷⁵ But it should be noted that his most comprehensive defence of Tours' celebrated (but atypical) immunity from taxation occurs when the tax-collectors arrive in his city hotfoot from neighbouring Poitiers, where they had been revising the registers in order to achieve a more equitable and up-to-date division of the burden, at the express request of Bishop Maroveus.⁷⁶ The tax-system was certainly decaying by the end of the sixth century, and it had been for some time. But it was still in sufficient working order for bishops like Maroveus to devote their energies to finding the devil in the details rather than the fundamental principle, and it was administered, as it always had been, through the *civitas*.

The inhabitants of post-Roman Gaul were still obliged to furnish the Frankish kings with services as well as money, and these were also organised through the

⁷² Equity: Greg. Tur. Hist. 3.1 (p. 97); 4.22 (p. 155). Ewig 1976 offers by far the best account of the various divisions, although one or two of his suggested attributions of *civitates* are questionable.

⁷³ Greg. Tur. Hist. 9.20 (p. 434f.). Guntram resorts again to road-blocks shortly afterwards, confirming their tactical utility: Hist. 9.28 (p. 446); 9.32 (p. 451).

⁷⁴ Goffart 1982. For assertions of greater continuity see Durliat 1990, questioned by Wickham 1993.

⁷⁵ Greg. Tur. Hist. 3.36 (p. 131f.); 7.15 (p. 337); Iul. 17 (p. 121f.). Gregory's anxieties on the subject of taxation are in themselves sufficient to show that the burden was still real.

⁷⁶ Hist. 9.30 (p. 448f.), with Hist. 10.7 (p. 488), for the contemporary administrative difficulties of collection at Clermont.

cities. Bishops disputed these burdens too, which were sufficiently widespread and familiar for the church in council to seek to regulate their imposition on the clergy and on those listed in its registers, although sadly the *publicae actiones* they were opposing are never precisely defined.⁷⁷ They may have incorporated some of the forced labour dues which the Roman state had required of its citizens, but in sixth-century sources the only clearly identifiable burden of this nature is comparatively novel: military service. In imperial times this had been the preserve of a professional army, but by Gregory's day the Frankish kings had come to rely instead upon a volatile combination of personal royal or aristocratic followings and local levies.⁷⁸ The origins of the latter are obscure, though it is tempting to trace their emergence back to the confusion of the fifth century, when the growing inability of the state to guarantee security will have led individual communities to ensure their defence as best they could, perhaps prompted, as in Britain, by official derogations of responsibility.⁷⁹ These arrangements may have originated on an *ad hoc* basis, but by the sixth century they had evolved into a regular framework for the mustering of troops, structured around cities, and probably grafted in some way onto the taxation system. Gregory incidentally mentions contingents of this type from eighteen different *civitates*, across a swathe of western and central Francia stretching from Bayeux in the north to Toulouse in the south.⁸⁰ Their recorded operations suggest these levies were mobilised exclusively for campaigns within Francia, usually from those cities within a given kingdom which lay closest to the military objective; this was perhaps in part because there was an agreed time-limit upon their service.⁸¹ In this respect, as in others, our understanding of the workings of this system is incomplete, but its routine organisation through the *civitas* network is not in doubt.⁸²

The official charged with enforcing these royal demands at the local level was usually the *comes civitatis*. The office of count appears to have been a Roman innovation from the twilight of the empire which was taken up by several

⁷⁷ Conc. Aurel. a. 541, c. 13 (p. 134). Greg. Tur. Hist. 5.26 (p. 233); 7.42 (p. 364) and probably 6.12 (p. 283) offers practical examples. Cf. Lex Ribuariorum 65.1–2 (p. 65), imposing fines for non-performance of royal, military, and, significantly, other services. By analogy with other western successor-states these burdens might have included defensive duties such as wall-repairs.

⁷⁸ Bachrach 1972 offers the fullest study, but the supposed continuities from Roman practice are doubtful; see also Frye 1995, and for a more general overview Halsall 2003, 40ff.

⁷⁹ As Ecdicius did against the Goths at Clermont in the early 470s: Sidon. Epist. 3.3 (p. 41f.). By 507, a Clermont contingent was fighting for the Goths at Vouillé: Greg. Tur. Hist. 2.37 (p. 88). Britain: Zos. 6.10.2 (ed. Paschoud, vol. 3.2, p. 13).

⁸⁰ Bachrach 1972, 66f.; Weidemann 1982 I, 238ff.

⁸¹ B.g. Greg. Tur. Hist. 5.26 (p. 232); 6.31 (p. 299); 8.30 (p. 393); 9.31 (p. 450). *Civitas*-levies could be used against Brittany and Septimania, probably because they were technically within Gaul, but were seemingly not conventionally deployed in Italy, Spain, or beyond the Rhine.

⁸² In the north-east, however, military service was probably organised through more extensive *regiones*, by far the most visible of which is Champagne: Greg. Tur. Hist. 10.3 (p. 484); 10.27 (p. 520). The smaller *pagi* were probably also involved in the mobilisation of *civitas*-levies: Hist. 4.50 (p. 187); 7.21 (p. 340); Vit. Patr. 8.11 (p. 250).

of the western successor-states and turned into a framework for the local conduct of secular administration.⁸³ Gregory mentions counts from more than twenty cities, scattered throughout Francia; it seems a reasonable inference that most cities were administered by an official of this type (or, in the north-east, his near counterpart, the *grafio*).⁸⁴ This development conforms to the two trends which have already been identified: a simplification and streamlining of the machinery of government, operating alongside a conscious effort to develop an alternative framework of rulership transmitted through cities. The relationship between court and city was now unmediated by intervening tiers of bureaucracy, and the count was the linkman on whom it depended: he forwarded the taxes, supervised the performance of the *publicae actiones*, maintained local order, and administered justice. It was a prestigious, profitable, but potentially thankless task, and it was made that much more difficult by the presence of a rival civic authority, the bishop, who enjoyed both an identical territorial jurisdiction and an overlapping sphere of competence in the field of law, and who was frequently minded to contest the financial and military demands of central government. Like the *curiales* before them, counts could find themselves caught between the interests of their political masters and those of the local community, and doomed thereby to satisfy neither.

From the perspective of central government cities were therefore the essential components of the political structure of sixth-century Francia; they made kingdoms. At the local level, meanwhile, they functioned as local political and cultural communities, and defined individuals. Despite the prevailing historiographical concern for matters of ethnicity, identity in sixth-century Gallic sources is ascribed primarily on the basis of the *civitas*, for example in referring to those of Roman descent who, lest we forget, comprised the bulk of the population.⁸⁵ Their civic identity will have been regularly reinforced by a number of shared experiences. Every city, for example, had its own liturgical round, orchestrated by the bishop, and, as we have seen in the case of Clermont, not necessarily confined to the *civitas*-capital.⁸⁶ It was on feast-days, in particular, that the city-community came together to join the great and good in procession, to exchange their surplus at market, and in hopeful anticipation of miraculous happenings in and around the churches of the saints.⁸⁷ Less festively, the city was bound together by its collective tax-burden, generating a shared resentment which could erupt into communal violence, sometimes plotted in advance in public meet-

⁸³ Claude 1964.

⁸⁴ Weidemann 1982 II, 63–80, catalogues counts from twenty-three *civitates* in Gregory's writings, though not all of them are explicitly given this title. *Grafio*: Murray 1986, Lib. Const. 13 (p. 33); implies that all cities in the Burgundian kingdom had counts. Only Provence exhibits a distinctive post-Roman regional civil administrative structure with a patrician at its head. This probably has its origins in the period of Ostrogothic rule over the region: Buchner 1933, 15ff. 86ff.

⁸⁵ Loseby 1998b, 241f.

⁸⁶ Hen 1995, 82–120.

⁸⁷ E.g. Greg. Tur. Hist. 8.1 (p. 370); 9.6 (p. 418); 9.9 (p. 423) for processions; Glor. Mart. 57 (p. 77) for exchange; Mart. 2.7 (p. 161) for a miracle *spectante populo*.

ings.⁸⁸ It also formed a legal community, presided over by the twin (if not necessarily mutually supportive) pillars of the justice system, the bishop and the count.⁸⁹ The operations of their municipal and ecclesiastical courts are frequently lost somewhere between the unremittingly rural world of the *Pactus Legis Salicae* and the tendency of many of the high-profile cases which we hear about in Gregory's *Histories* to gravitate upwards, sooner rather than later, into the elevated sphere of royal jurisdiction. In practice, nevertheless, the city was the setting in which justice was regularly done, and seen to be done. The occasional anecdote and, especially, the formularies dating from between the sixth and the early ninth centuries which survive from several Gallic cities make it clear that urban legal acts were public, consensual, and participatory, indeed excessively so for the taste of those bishops who sought to curb the enthusiasm of the junior clergy for attending tortures and executions.⁹⁰ The decisions arrived at by process of law were read aloud, posted up, and registered in the public archives for the benefit of posterity. Here, most significantly, wills were opened, read, and stored, so claims of title to land could be asserted by reference to both collective memory and written record.⁹¹ Whichever of these was the more significant, it was in the cities that ownership of the surrounding countryside was ordered and legitimised. Bishop Bertram of Le Mans could therefore hope that his testamentary dispositions would endure forever.⁹²

None of these incentives towards identification with one's *civitas* was entirely new, but they may for a time have taken on greater intensity in the light of some of the previously-mentioned political and military structures of the sixth-century Frankish polity. The group identity of the inhabitants of a *civitas* can only have been enhanced, for example, by their shared experiences on campaign with the local levy or by collective resistance to rapacious taxmen and raiding neighbours. The *civitas*-conscripts were not necessarily reluctant combatants, for they occasionally banded together to plunder the territory of adjacent cities without the benefit of official sanction. Take the men of Orléans and Blois, who took advantage of the confusion which followed King Chilperic's assassination to ravage the neighbouring territory of Châteaudun, burning down everything they could not carry off with them. Their victims swiftly ganged up with the rest of the inhabitants of Chartres to retaliate systematically in kind, "leaving nothing in the houses, or outside the houses, or of the houses".⁹³ The conflict was only prevent-

⁸⁸ Greg. Tur. Hist. 5.28 (p. 234).

⁸⁹ James 1983; Wood 1986; Charles-Edwards 2000, 280f.

⁹⁰ Classen 1977. For the dispensing of justice in urban contexts, see Formul. Andecav. in particular. Clergy: Sinod. Autiss. aa. 561x605, cc. 33–34 (p. 269); Conc. Marisc. a.585, c. 19 (p. 247); cf. Conc. Narbon. a. 589, c.3 (p. 254), for a general prohibition against them hanging around in public squares.

⁹¹ E.g. Formul. Arvern. 1 (p. 28); Greg. Tur. Vit. Patr. 8.5 (p. 245); Bertram of Le Mans, Test., no. 68 (p.45). For the public context of legal procedures in general, Frye 2003. For urban archives, Wood 1990, 64f.

⁹² Bertram of Le Mans, Test., App. (p. 49): *rogo ... ut cum testamentum meum apertum fuerit ... gestis municipalibus secundum legem faciat alligari, quo semper firmiter perduret.*

⁹³ Greg. Tur. Hist. 7.2 (p. 327): *nihil in domibus vel extra domus vel de domibus relinquentes.*

ed from escalating further by the belated intervention of the counts. Such episodes look anarchic (an impression Gregory of Tours does little to discourage), but they were the logical consequences of the militarisation of the *civitates* and the piecemeal divisions of royal power, which together created lasting enmities and the means to pursue them. The cities confronting each other in this conflict, for example, belonged to different kingdoms recently engaged in a bloody civil war, and the men of Orléans and Blois were probably settling old scores. The partitions of the kingdom on a city-by-city basis were fiscally flexible, but by creating a shifting mosaic of internal frontiers they did much to generate tensions between adjacent cities on different sides of the many and ever-changing political divides.

The contraction of identity to the level of the *civitas* also created tensions between cities and their rulers, for it was here that loyalties to one kingdom or another were formally established by the taking of oaths.⁹⁴ In the contemporary books of Gregory's *Histories* individual *civitates* recurrently seek to determine their own allegiances against the background of the formal allocations and irregular acquisitions of city-territories which followed repeatedly upon the deaths of each of Lothar I's sons. In the aftermath of Chilperic's murder, for example, King Guntram sought to extend his authority over the cities which had been under his brother's control, although some of these wanted to seize the chance to reaffirm their former loyalty to the Austrasian kingdom of Childebert. Under duress, the inhabitants of Tours and Poitiers swore an oath of allegiance to Guntram; the latter soon repented of it, but were finally persuaded to acknowledge the king's authority over them, though only "with reluctance", and after his troops had repeatedly ravaged their territory. Their defiance had been otiose, as it turned out, since their city was soon restored to Childebert, in circumstances which Gregory of Tours does not trouble to explain fully.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, Angers and Rennes, two other cities which had belonged to Chilperic, strove instead to remain loyal to his infant son, Lothar, going so far as to offer active resistance to the appointment of Guntram's nominees over them.⁹⁶ Like the *ad hoc* campaigning of renegade *civitas*-militias, the scale of these attempts at civic self-determination should not be exaggerated. They were usually short-lived and unsuccessful, because the kings could bring overwhelming force to bear if they so wished, even in cities far removed from the heartlands of their power.⁹⁷ It is also worth noting their limited ambition: like Frankish aristocrats, cities were, as far we can see, always choosing between rival Merovingian rulers. There is nothing from sixth-century Francia to match the independence from central government sporadically enjoyed by some contemporary communities in Visigothic Spain.⁹⁸

Although such civic resistance was firmly confined within the framework of royal authority, its existence is nevertheless significant, in that it demonstrates

⁹⁴ Frye 1995.

⁹⁵ Greg. Tur. Hist. 7.12f. (p. 333f.); 7.24 (p. 344).

⁹⁶ Greg. Tur. Hist. 8.18 (p. 385); 8.42 (p. 408).

⁹⁷ E.g. Marseille: Greg. Tur. Hist. 6.11 (p. 280f.); Loseby 1998a, 225f.

⁹⁸ Spain: Collins 1980.

how sixth-century Frankish cities functioned as political communities with minds of their own. In many ways, this should scarcely be surprising. The independence of civic government had largely drained away towards the centre in late Antiquity, but after Rome's fall, the exercise of power was once again channelled primarily through cities, partly *faute de mieux*, but also by royal design. The ties that bound *civitas*-communities together – in praying, fighting, swearing oaths of loyalty – demanded public participation, and an element of collective decision-making. But who took those decisions? How did a city-community choose to prefer one king over another, for example, and who lined up to take the *sacramenta* routinely demanded on such occasions?⁹⁹ A significant role in such matters will certainly have been played by the bishop, or conceivably by local secular officials such as the count, but they can scarcely be credited with the orchestration of attacks on tax-collectors, let alone the launching of impromptu raids into neighbouring *civitates*, activities which they were normally seeking to restrain. Instead, we have to reckon here with the lingering presence in many sixth-century Frankish cities of an urban elite, whose equivalents can also be readily detected in other emergent western successor-states, and who would be broadly comparable in nature to the notables who were assigned a formal role in the administration of cities in the eastern empire from around the start of the sixth century.¹⁰⁰ The responsibilities of these various 'post-curial' bodies, the terminology used to describe their members, and the criteria by which they were selected remain rather uncertain, and may well have been fluid. But leaving aside the niceties of their formal constitutional and procedural workings, a shift towards civic government by an elite group, usually operating in conjunction with the bishop, is widely perceptible. This general development, like many a feature of the sixth-century world, appears to represent the consolidation of an existing trend, in this case towards the concentration of local power in the hands of fewer and fewer individuals.

It must be admitted that in the sources for post-Roman Gaul such entities – one hesitates to call them institutions – are particularly difficult to spot. They are most apparent in the formularies surviving from several cities, which persist until as late as the early ninth century in describing the activities of a *curia*, or city-council.¹⁰¹ The only responsibility directly associated with such bodies in these texts is the registration of land transactions and their deposition in the municipal archives, although it should be acknowledged that this was in itself an act of the utmost social importance. A few documents survive to confirm that the procedure set down in the formularies was closely followed in practice. In the late 670s, for example, a donation of land to the abbey of Noirmoutier was registered and

⁹⁹ *Sacramenta*: Greg. Tur. Hist. 4.30 (p. 162); 4.45 (p. 180); 6.12 (p. 282); 6.31 (p. 300); 7.7 (p. 330); 7.12f. (p. 333f.); 7.24 (p. 344) etc.

¹⁰⁰ Liebeschuetz 2001, 104ff.

¹⁰¹ Formul. Andecav. 1a (p. 4); 1c (p. 5); 48 (p. 21); Formul. Arvern. 1b (p. 28); 2b (p. 29); Cart. Senon. 39f. p. (202f.); App. 1b–1d (p. 209); Formul. Turon. 2f. (p. 136 f.); 20 (p. 146); 23 (p. 147); 28 (p. 151); Formul. Bitur. 3 (p. 169); 6f. (p. 170f.); 15c. (p. 176); Marculf, Formul. 2.37 (p. 97).

deposited in the *gesta municipalia* at Poitiers, in a ritualised performance which was witnessed by seven persons calling themselves *curiales*, one indication that the use of such classical terminology was not simply formulaic.¹⁰² The regular presence of such persons in the extant formularies makes it all the more curious that one searches in vain for recognition of the existence of either town-councils or their individual members in the writings of Gregory of Tours, such a prolix source for the workings of sixth-century society, who never once employs the terms *curia* or *curialis*. Here, however, we have to contend with Gregory's peculiar historiographical agenda, and his promotion of a model of *Bischofsherrschaft* which corresponded only imperfectly, as he well knew, to reality.¹⁰³ Gregory was striving as far as possible to present bishops as the leaders of an undifferentiated urban *populus*. He occasionally used another conveniently flexible term, *civis*, in order to designate the members of what sometimes seems to be an urban executive, but in such a way as to make their distinction from everyday citizens apparent only from the specific context in which they appear.¹⁰⁴ By eschewing the language of official terminology, Gregory could further the impression that bishops were the exclusive locally-accredited figures of authority in cities, impeded in their ministrations to the community only by externally-appointed royal officers such as counts. In the same way as he evoked a Christian urban space through the exclusion of competing elements of the landscape, so he peopled it with a community under episcopal domination.

The systematic application of this device throughout Gregory's *Histoires* effectively denies us a rounded view of the sixth-century urban political community in action. Gregory does intermittently signal the presence of a better sort of citizenry in the wings of his urban stages through the use of such terms as *seniores*, *maiores*, and *cives honorati*, but denies them any formal status as alternative sources of urban power.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps the closest he ever comes to doing so is in reporting how the population of his own see turned out to participate with all due ceremony in the transfer of relics of Martin and others of his favourite saints to an oratory which Bishop Gregory was swiftly establishing in his predecessor's storeroom. To magnify this civic occasion Gregory eagerly invokes, in uncharacteristically technical language, the participation of the "famous order of distinguished citizens", who appear after the clergy, but before a large crowd of people of the next rank. It is no coincidence that this episode takes place shortly after his arrival in Tours, where his status as an outsider had placed Gregory under

¹⁰² Les chartes mérovingiennes de l'abbaye de Noirmoutier, avec une étude sur la chronologie du règne du Dagobert II, ed. E.J. Tardif, Paris 1899, no. 3 (p. 28–30); Claude 1960, 56f. Bertram of Le Mans, Test., App. (p. 48), for a will of 616 with a similar number of witnesses, two of whom are qualified as *honorati*, though none as *curiales*.

¹⁰³ Heinzelmänn 1988; 1994.

¹⁰⁴ For Gregory's complex use of *civis* see Weidemann 1982 II, 307ff., and esp. Durlint 1997.

¹⁰⁵ E.g. Hist. 2.23 (p. 69); 4.43 (p. 178); 5.48 (p. 258); 6.11 (p. 281); 8.21 (p. 388); 8.31 (p. 398); 10.16 (p. 506); Glor. Conf. 58 (p. 332); 60 (p. 333) etc. It is equally significant that Gregory only once mentions a possible *defensor civitatis*, another term still in regular use in the formularies: Vit. Patr. 6.6 (p. 234). Cf. Durlint 1997, 188f.

considerable practical and psychological strain.¹⁰⁶ A hierarchically-defined urban elite is put formally on parade here precisely because the bishop is anxious to depict the consensual basis of his authority over Tours in the strongest possible terms.

Normally, however, Gregory takes care to avoid such loaded terms as *ordo* and *curia*, and thereby denies the various politically-influential citizens lurking within his urban narratives any corporate context for their deliberations. The continued existence of such bodies is implicit in the formularies, and in parallels with other sixth-century polities, but given the inadequate nature of our sources the workings of the Frankish arrangements remain particularly unknowable. But whether these were legally-constituted bodies or self-selecting interest-groups, or indeed both, we might accept that the structures of the Frankish state outlined above lent them a genuine *raison d'être*, particularly in a period of recurrent political uncertainty. Although it is certainly the case that many of the traditional responsibilities of the city-councils, notably tax-collection, had now passed to the count, the devolution of power and of the expression of loyalty to the level of the city could, as we have seen, frequently call for collective decision-making on behalf of the urban community. It is in precisely such situations that *seniores* and leading *cives* emerge in Gregory's narrative among the arbiters of religious, legal or political preference, however reluctant he is to depict them actually making a decision. Naturally, these local leaders operate alongside bishops, and frequently under their direction, a relationship prescribed by law elsewhere in the sixth-century world.¹⁰⁷ Even so, episcopal dominion over cities can never have been as absolute as Gregory would have us believe. In what was indisputably a militarised and violent society, bishops did not, with one or two notorious exceptions, bear arms, one fundamental reason for Gregory's relentless emphasis upon the vengeful determination of the saints to watch over the interests of the church and its members. There is, after all, no *Heer* in *Bischofsherrschaft*. To exercise power effectively in cities which remained the cornerstones of the Frankish polity, the prudent bishop might choose to operate as far as possible as *primus inter pares*, relying on a form of consensual civic politics in which local secular leaders – the heirs of the *curiales* in nature and, at least in some cases, in title – were often closely implicated.

It should be reiterated that the patterns sketched here do not apply uniformly across Gaul, and that elements of them are far better attested in some regions than in others. The north-east, for example, may have been somewhat different.¹⁰⁸ But

¹⁰⁶ Greg. Tur. Glor. Conf. 20 (p. 309): *erat autem sacerdotum ac levitarum in albis vestibus non minimus chorus et civium honoratorum ordo praeclarus, sed et populi sequentis ordinis magnus conventus*. Strain: Van Dam 1993, 63f. For a comparable case, see Glor. Conf. 104 (p. 365), where Gregory stresses he was called upon to officiate at Radegund's funeral by the *cives et reliqui viri honorati* of Poitiers, on an occasion when his behaviour could have been construed as irregular.

¹⁰⁷ Heinzelmann 1988; Durlat 1996; Liebeschuetz 2001, 137ff.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Verhaege 1990 for an overview of the situation in Belgica. In my view, even so, all regions contained some more and some less successful cities, such that in regard to urbanism the north-south divide which is frequently assumed to have existed within early medieval Francia is unhelpfully schematic. I hope to return to this issue elsewhere.

no region of Frankish Gaul exhibits the total breakdown of the *civitas*-framework which occurred just across the Channel.¹⁰⁹ The dominant territorial unit throughout sixth-century Francia remained the *civitas*, not the more extensive *regiones* which were slowly emerging to replace the Roman *provinciae*, nor yet the smaller *pagi*.¹¹⁰ For a variety of reasons which it would require another paper to consider, this was beginning to change in the time of Gregory of Tours, and the city-based framework outlined above would largely disintegrate within a few decades of his death. Until the later sixth century, however, perhaps four-fifths of Roman Gaul retained the cellular *civitas*-structure inherited from the Roman period in the sphere of secular as well as ecclesiastical power. The functions of cities had been significantly remodelled in accordance with the different needs of their new rulers, but these developments were evolutionary, not revolutionary. Cities had lost little in importance as a result. What we might call the late antique phase of Gallo-Roman urbanism endured well into the sixth century.

This leaves me finally to confront the seeming discordance between the deterioration of the material reality of the ancient city in Gaul from the late second century onwards (which had certainly not been arrested in the fifth and sixth centuries), and the continuing conceptual and functional importance of the *civitas* as an organising social principle, a contradiction which is greatly complicated, lest we forget, by the contemporary redefinition of urban identities and monumental landscapes under Christian inspiration. The paradoxes involved were implicit in the case with which we began, Clermont. Elsewhere, they are more abundantly obvious. At Gregory's Tours, for example, we have a wealth of textual evidence for the existence of a vibrant urban community, and some excellent archaeological data which suggests nothing of the sort [see below Guyon fig. 9].¹¹¹ As Henri GALINIÉ has justly observed of the sixth-century city, "la contradiction entre réputation et réalité matérielle se révèle flagrante", concluding provocatively that "Tours apparaît au VI^e siècle, comme une ville sans vie urbaine".¹¹² I have no intention here of venturing down the *cul-de-sac* of urban definitions, and no simple explanation for the discrepancies in our evidence. I will merely conclude by discussing some possible approaches to the contradictions involved.

One such approach which seems to me unhelpful, but which can lurk, usually unstated, behind many a discussion of late antique urbanism is the privileging of one category of evidence over the other. Depending upon one's preference, this can involve the rejection of the textual evidence as anecdotal and rhetorical, or of the archaeological evidence as unrepresentative and insufficient (or, indeed, *vice versa*). The two types of data are equally susceptible to criticism, of course, but it seems preferable to strive for an understanding of the late antique city which can accommodate their numerous flaws, while remaining respectful of the epistemological differences between the disciplines which generate them. This requires an

¹⁰⁹ Loseby 2000b.

¹¹⁰ For the rise of the *regio*, see Rouche 1997.

¹¹¹ Pietri 1983; Galinié 1997.

¹¹² Galinié 1997, 74f.

appreciation of each category of evidence on its own terms, and an acceptance that the dislocations involved can in themselves be revealing of contrasting aspects of the late antique urban experience.¹¹³ Some reconciliation between the different types of evidence is perhaps most easily achieved, for example, by advancing what might be called an institutional model of late antique Gallic urbanism. This has been enthusiastically elaborated with reference to the church by historians both at the time and in the present, but it might also apply as follows in the secular sphere. Cities remained the vital organs of the administration, but the monumental expression of their secular role was drastically diminished by comparison with earlier periods. The enduring fiscal, judicial and military operations of the sixth-century city required little more than a building – a *palatium*, to dignify it somewhat – to house the count and his small staff, an archive for document storage, and an open space – the *foro publico* of the formularies – for the holding of public assemblies and markets (as well as a field, somewhere safely outside the city, for military musters). These minimal requirements could readily be accommodated within a 3-hectare space, even if a cathedral complex was occupying half of it. And thus we might imagine the sixth-century secular public landscape of intra-mural Clermont, or one of the hilltop cities of Novempopulana. In various ways, therefore, life for both the elite and the more humble inhabitants of a *civitas* could revolve around the city on a regular but not necessarily permanent basis, as a consequence of their relationship with these secular and ecclesiastical institutions. They might choose or be compelled to go to town for all manner of reasons, but they did not have to live there.

This institutional model is nevertheless insufficient, and in some ways forced upon us, because evidence from sixth-century Gaul for two crucial and related aspects of contemporary urbanism – which might do much to explain why some cities were more dynamic than others – is in pitifully short supply. The first of these potentially significant variables concerns the part played by cities in structuring local and regional economic networks. Such activity is only incidentally revealed by the written sources, where every passing reference to exchange in cities has, *faute de mieux*, been thoroughly dissected, but affords scant prospect of understanding their role in economic systems. Archaeology is now gradually revealing patterns of production, distribution and exchange, at least with regard to a few specific centres, but any general conclusions would be premature.¹¹⁴ Secondly, apart from secular and religious personnel of one sort or another, and the occasional allusion to artisans or merchants, we know too little about urban populations; the most visible inhabitants of cities are often the poor, registered for alms at urban churches. More conjectural is the widespread presence of a resident aristocracy, like that well-documented in cities in northern Italy (at least by the eighth century), where it has been hailed as an index of the persistence of a “true urban society”, because of the stimulating effects of their purchase power.¹¹⁵ The little textual data we have from Gaul, particularly in the form of wills,

¹¹³ Cf. Galinié 1997, 65.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Claude 1985 for an excellent compendium of the textual data.

¹¹⁵ Wickham 1981, 80ff.

suggests that Frankish élites maintained both rural and urban holdings in time-honoured fashion. Bishop Bertram, for example, disposed of houses in Paris, Bordeaux, the former *civitas*-capital of Jublains, and his own city, some of which he claimed to have built.¹¹⁶ Such urban properties may not always have been especially distinguished, nor easily distinguishable from their rural counterparts. When the magnate Eberulf fell into disgrace, and his *domus* within the walls of Tours was ransacked, it was found to be full of "corn, wine, hides, and all sorts of other things" – *rus in urbe*.¹¹⁷ His enigmatic contemporary Chariulf, *valde dives et praepotens*, put his many store-rooms and warehouses within the walls of St-Bertrand-de-Comminges at the besieged Gundovald's disposal.¹¹⁸ These two examples correspond broadly with the residential *domus* and agricultural *auxilia* often outlined in lists of landholdings.¹¹⁹ The lifestyle they evoke does not equate closely with classical concepts of city living, but the very fact that some aristocrats were preferring to accumulate their agricultural surplus in cities, perhaps because these were more secure, rather than on their rural estates, is one useful indication of the division of their interests between town and country. There are many good reasons, as we have seen, to imagine that they needed to be periodically present in cities, whether to exercise power or simply to display their status.¹²⁰

The architectural expression of this aristocratic presence in sixth-century cities is proving archaeologically elusive, with little trace of the fine town-houses of earlier periods. But if we judge the cities frequented by the likes of Eberulf and Chariulf in their contemporary context, and not by the standards of the second-century heyday of classical urbanism, then we may need to revise our expectations. For if we venture through the city-gates, past the saints in the suburbs, and cautiously out into the sixth-century Gallic countryside we find, to paraphrase a recent summary by Paul VAN OSSEL, that it is characterised by a general and steady reduction in a still-dispersed settlement pattern, the very rough and ready maintenance of a much-reduced number of villas, the adaptation of existing structures to new uses, often involving a reduction in occupied spaces and the resort to perishable materials, and the emergence of new building-types and layouts, often dubiously dubbed Germanic.¹²¹ In short, *grasso modo*, a very similar set of phenomena to those visible in contemporary cities: fewer people, simpler structures, new *modes de vie*. The dilapidated condition of much urban

¹¹⁶ Bertram, *Test.*, no. 24 (p. 20f.); no. 25 (p. 21f.); no. 30 (p. 24); no. 36 (p. 28); no. 71 (p. 47). Claude 1997, 331f., assembles some of the textual evidence for urban housing. I hope to return to this issue in detail elsewhere.

¹¹⁷ Greg. *Tur. Hist.* 7.22 (p. 340): *domus vero inframuranea, quam de dominatione ecclesiae abstulerat, referta annonis, vino adque tergoribus rebusque aliis multis.*

¹¹⁸ Greg. *Tur. Hist.* 7.37 (p. 359): *erat autem Gundovaldo et Chariulfus valde dives ac praepotens, cuius apothecis ac prumptuariis urbs valde referta erat; de cuius substantia hi maxime alebantur.*

¹¹⁹ Claude 1997, 323.

¹²⁰ See Greg. *Tur. Hist.* 9.9 (p. 423), for Rauching's wife parading through Soissons in all her finery.

¹²¹ Van Ossel 1997, 82.

habitation in sixth-century Gaul is thus no proof in itself of an aristocratic flight to the countryside. Archaeological traces of their presence there are generally just as elusive, with few signs of the maintenance of villa occupation on anything approaching its former grandeur.¹²²

If we look at cities in this light, evaluating them against contemporary social realities rather than absolute notional criteria of urbanism, then against a general background of declining population, diminishing prosperity and simplified material culture, many of them were perhaps as central – and just as special – to the inhabitants of a *civitas* as ever. The military or religious manifestations of their importance, as we have seen, are abundantly apparent, whether in those taking refuge or seeking salvation in cities, or in the new domination of the urban landscape by walls and churches. The significance of cities in the sphere of secular administration lacks similarly obvious expression in stone, but is no less evident in the written sources. The social and economic roles of cities are enigmatic by comparison, but implicit to some extent in the presence of wealthy urban institutions – the presence of sundry churches and monasteries generates significant and recurrent demand for foodstuffs, materials, and services, not all of which will have been met from these communities' own resources – as well as in the occasional anecdote about shops, markets, or houses. The shadow of the urban landscape of former centuries will have loomed large over the daily lives of the city-dwellers of Frankish Gaul, presenting both an opportunity and a threat; when Bishop Praeiection of Clermont sought to repair an old house, probably not far outside the city-walls, he had to break off to pray successfully for the survival of a bystander crushed by falling masonry.¹²³ The same long shadow of the classical past obscures our ability to appreciate the post-Roman city in Gaul on its own terms; even so, like the beneficiary of Praeiection's prayers, it was generally still very much alive, though no doubt it subsisted in a more dishevelled and incoherent condition than before.

To conclude, if we compare the trajectory of late antique urbanism in Gaul with that of other regions of the empire, then it is marked on the one hand by a relatively precocious downturn in the scale and complexity of urban form, but on the other by a much more gradual revision of urban function to meet changing needs and expectations. This distinct phase gets under way as early as the late second century, when the first signs of urban decay begin to appear, and it continues down at least to the end of the sixth, by which time the enduring bonds between the city and its dependent territory were beginning to come under some

¹²² Balmelle/Van Ossel 2001, with the other papers in Ouzoulias et al. 2001. Aquitaine offers by far the best evidence of the upkeep of aristocratic rural residences on traditional lines, though this is generally hard to pursue through the sixth century: see Balmelle 2001. Cf. Lewit 2003 for a more general summary of the archaeological disappearance of elite residences from town and country alike in the post-Roman west.

¹²³ *Passio Praeiectioni* 11 (p. 232). The church of St. Adiutor, where Praeiection prayed, was in the vicinity; for its likely location, see Prévot 1989, 37 [see below Guyon, fig. 10, no. 18]. The provision or restoration of urban housing by bishops is a recurrent theme in hagiography, but also in wills, and is unlikely to be a simple topos.

strain, particularly in the secular sphere. Whether one chooses to view this general pattern as representative of decline or change depends upon one's starting-point, and one's expectations of urbanism. Gallic society was still structured around cities, but those cities had been radically transformed. The single most important agent of that transformation, in urban form as well as function, was Christianity, as is outlined in Jean GUYON's paper, but it was by no means the only one.

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La topographie chrétienne des villes de la Gaule

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Les étudiants de ma génération brandissaient volontiers (mais hors des amphithéâtres) un "petit livre rouge"; dans cette salle de séminaire, c'est un gros et beau livre bleu que nous avons tous en main. Il faut savoir gré au Prof. Jens-Uwe KRAUSE, au Dr. Christian WITSCHER et, plus largement, à l'Université de Munich d'avoir pris l'heureuse initiative de nous réunir autour de l'auteur de ce livre, le Prof. Wolf LIEBESCHUETZ, afin de prolonger avec lui la réflexion qu'il a ouverte. Ce que je ferai pour ma part dans cette intervention qui s'inscrit en contrepoint de celle du Dr. Simon LOSEBY: c'est encore du devenir des cités des Gaules entre le IV^e et le VI^e siècle, dates rondes, qu'il s'agira en effet, mais cette fois, le sujet sera abordé sous l'angle de la topographie chrétienne.

Ce sera l'occasion pour moi d'illustrer quel excellent "marqueur" de l'évolution urbaine à la fin de l'Antiquité et au début du Moyen Âge cette topographie peut constituer. Le phénomène est d'ailleurs bien connu et ne vaut pas que pour les Gaules: ce que j'en dirai se vérifie largement aussi pour une bonne part de l'Occident, comme G. CANTINO-WATAGHIN, de l'Université de Turin, J.-M. GURT, de l'Université de Barcelone, et moi-même avons essayé de le montrer dans une communication que nous avons présentée, il y a une dizaine d'années, à Ravello.¹ S'il est un privilège pour les Gaules, il tient au fait que l'on peut prendre commodément appui pour leur étude sur les résultats de l'enquête sur la *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule*, qui arrive maintenant presque à son terme,² et sur le recueil exhaustif des *Premiers monuments chrétiens de la France*, qui a été publié à l'initiative du ministère de la Culture sous la direction scientifique du Prof. Noël DUVAL.³

L'ensemble de ces travaux me permettra d'examiner successivement les différents éléments constitutifs d'une topographie chrétienne: l'*ecclesia* d'abord, puis les autres églises urbaines et, pour finir, les monastères et les établissements du *suburbium*; auparavant, je souhaiterais – et ce sera plus qu'une introduction ou un hors d'œuvre – considérer le réseau que formaient les villes épiscopales.

Ce réseau m'intéressera moins en lui-même qu'en référence à ce document unique que constitue la *Notitia Galliarum*, qui fournit – autre privilège qui distingue les Gaules des Espagnes et de l'Italie – la nomenclature de la bonne centaine de cités que comptait au début du V^e siècle le territoire gaulois, sans

¹ Cantino-Wataghin/Gurt/Guyon 1996.

² N. Gauthier et J.-C. Picard (éds.), puis N. Gauthier, B. Beaujard, F. Prévot (éds.), *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIII^e siècle*: 13 fascicules parus depuis 1986; 1 fascicule sous presse.

³ N. Duval (éd.), *Les premiers monuments chrétiens de la France*, 3 vol., 1995-98.

parler de quelques agglomérations secondaires, *portus* et autres *castra*.⁴ Or, en dépit des règles canoniques qui commandaient que la carte ecclésiastique se confondît avec la carte administrative de l'Empire, la liste des villes épiscopales n'a pas toujours coïncidé, même à date haute, avec celle des chefs-lieux de cités de la *Notitia*. Le fait peut n'être pas sans signification, à la fois pour les cités qui ont été négligées par l'Église et pour celles qui ont été promues, même si la raison de ces écarts tient le plus souvent, comme il se doit, au pragmatisme qui a présidé à la mission chrétienne.

Quelques exemples en ce sens, pris dans le Midi de la Gaule. D'abord, celui du *portus* de Nice, qui relève du tout premier établissement chrétien sur le territoire gaulois puisque son Église, d'ailleurs encore embryonnaire, était représentée par un diacre et un exorciste au concile d'Arles de 314.⁵ sa création doit tout, sans doute, à une initiative pastorale de l'Église de Marseille, car Nikaia gardait des liens privilégiés avec Massalia dont elle fut un comptoir, et l'on sait en outre qu'au concile de Turin, à la fin du IV^e siècle ou au début du V^e siècle, l'évêque de Marseille soutenait que son Église avait été à l'origine de la plupart des évêchés de la Provence orientale.⁶ Mais autant vaut pour les Églises du *locus* de Toulon et du *castrum* d'Uzès, qui apparaissent dans nos sources dans la première moitié du V^e siècle, la première comme une création faite au détriment du territoire arlésien,⁷ tandis que la seconde devait sa naissance à un démembrement de l'évêché de Nîmes.⁸ En ces cas aussi, ces créations peuvent s'expliquer par un souci pastoral, Nîmes et Arles étant des évêchés fort vastes, dont les fidèles répugnaient sans doute à se rendre pour les grandes fêtes à la cathédrale située au chef-lieu, comme la réglementation conciliaire leur en faisait obligation.⁹ On ne saurait donc interpréter les amputations apportées à leur territoire comme des signes d'affaiblissement de ces cités: la chose pourrait à la rigueur être soutenue pour Nîmes, qui n'a pas brillé d'un éclat particulier pendant l'Anti-quité tardive; elle est sûrement à exclure pour Arles, qui fut alors ville impériale. J'arrête là avec les exemples, d'autant qu'une étude exhaustive montrerait que ces premières différences entre la carte ecclésiastique et la carte administrative de l'Empire sont restées minimales et relativement aisées à expliquer, ce qui fournit un sûr témoignage sur la solidité d'ensemble du réseau des cités gauloises, au moins au V^e siècle.

Il reste que, dès ce V^e siècle et dans les siècles ultérieurs, il y a eu des déplacements de sièges épiscopaux, et ce phénomène aussi doit être analysé avec la plus grande attention. Certains cas relèvent sûrement d'un souci de simplification de la carte ecclésiastique. Nice en fournit à nouveau un exemple, puisque son Église a supplanté celle de Cimiez, le chef-lieu de la cité dont elle dépendait, qui était devenue elle aussi ville épiscopale en 442 au plus tard.¹⁰ Les deux sièges

⁴ Not. Gall. (éd. T. Mommsen, MGH AA IX pp. 584-612).

⁵ Conc. Galliae (éd. C. Munier, CCL CXLVIII, Turnhout 1963, p. 16).

⁶ Ibid., p. 56.

⁷ TCG 2, 61-62 (P.-A. Février).

⁸ TCG 7, 70 (P.-A. Février).

⁹ Ainsi au concile d'Agde, c. 21 (éd. citée, pp. 202-203).

¹⁰ Son premier évêque apparaît en effet au concile de Vaison de 442: *ibid.*, p. 102.

étaient si proches qu'il y avait là une sorte d'anomalie, qui a justifié entre 462 et 468 l'intervention de l'évêque de Rome Hilaire: il a tranché le débat qui s'était élevé entre Ingenius d'Embrun et Auxanius d'Aix – donc entre les métropolitains des Alpes Maritimes et de Narbonnaise Seconde – “au sujet de la *ciuitas* de Cimiez et du *castellum* de Nice” en n'ordonnant la déposition d'aucun des deux évêques concernés, mais en signifiant que la réunion des deux sièges devait se faire au plus tôt, comme l'avait sans doute déjà suggéré avant lui Léon le Grand. De fait, on trouve au concile d'Orléans de 549 la signature d'un évêque de Cimiez et de Nice et si, par la suite, Magnus signe bien à Arles en 554 comme évêque de Cimiez, les évêques ultérieurs, à Mâcon en 585, puis à Paris en 614, emploient respectivement les formules *a Niccia* et *ex ciuitate Nicia*: Nice l'avait donc définitivement emporté.¹¹

D'autres transferts, en revanche, participaient peut-être de projets plus vastes. C'est en tout cas ce que les Prof. Brigitte BEAUJARD et Françoise PRÉVOT ont suggéré avec beaucoup de finesse lors d'un récent colloque qui s'est tenu à Tours,¹² en attirant l'attention sur le royaume burgonde, qui n'offre pas moins de trois exemples de déplacements d'évêchés ou d'installation d'évêché ailleurs qu'au chef-lieu de cité, ce qui revient un peu au même. Ce dernier cas est évidemment celui de Genève, qui a totalement éclipsé Nyon (qui n'a jamais été ville épiscopale), certainement parce qu'elle était l'une des deux capitales du royaume burgonde. Mais il faut également compter, au nord du royaume, avec le glissement progressif du siège d'Avenches, qui était encore un chef-lieu de cité pour la *Notitia Galliarum*, vers Windisch au VI^e siècle, pour passer enfin à Lausanne au VII^e siècle. Et autant vaut, au sud du royaume cette fois, pour un autre glissement, peut-être progressif lui aussi, celui du siège d'Alba vers Viviers, qui a sans doute été inauguré au tournant des V^e–VI^e siècles: en 472, la correspondance de Sidoine Apollinaire montre en effet qu'Alba est encore chef-lieu; en 517 en revanche, apparaît au concile d'Epaone la signature de Venantius, *episcopus ciuitatis Viuaensis*, mais à Orléans, en 549, l'archidiacre Cautinus signe encore au nom de l'évêque de la cité d'Alba,¹³ “ce qui pourrait suggérer”, comme l'a écrit le regretté P.-A. FÉVRIER, “soit une fidélité à un titre ancien, soit un abandon [d'Alba] qui n'était que temporaire au départ”.¹⁴ Les mêmes difficultés d'interprétation se rencontrent d'ailleurs, plus au sud encore, à propos de Carpentras et de Venasque, dont les évêques, au VI^e siècle, signent indifféremment du nom de l'une ou l'autre ville, quand ce n'est pas des deux à la fois,¹⁵ et le parallèle avec Alba et Viviers est d'autant plus fondé que dans les deux cas, les villes qui l'ont finalement emporté, Viviers et Venasque, occupent des sites de hauteur, tandis que leurs rivales étaient établies en plaine.

¹¹ Pour plus de détails, voir TCG 2, 85 (Y. Duval).

¹² Ferdière 2004.

¹³ Sur tous ces points, pour plus de détails, voir les actes du Colloque cité à la note précédente.

¹⁴ TCG 3, 59 (P.-A. Février).

¹⁵ TCG 3, 105 (J. Biamé).

À nouveau, j'arrête l'énumération, car elle deviendrait fastidieuse. Ce que je voulais montrer par ces quelques exemples, c'est combien il n'est pas toujours si facile, au cas par cas, de démêler les raisons qui ont pu conduire, par le biais de ces déplacements, à accroître l'écart entre carte ecclésiastique et carte administrative, d'autant que le pragmatisme de la mission, la volonté politique ou le choix de sites plus aisément défendables n'expliquent pas tout sans doute; il faudrait prendre en compte également des réalités économiques que je laisse à de plus compétents le soin d'analyser. Pour autant, l'ensemble du dossier témoigne sans équivoque, pour l'Antiquité tardive, d'une géographie mouvante,¹⁶ dont on ne saurait cependant affirmer qu'elle faisait fi des cités, puisque la plupart des chefs-lieux, malgré tout, ont été, et sont restés, villes épiscopales. Quant aux exceptions à cette règle, qu'il suffise de rappeler que la carte administrative des Gaules avait connu, entre la rédaction des provinces sous Auguste et l'édition de la *Notitia Galliarum*, des modifications au moins aussi importantes que celles qui viennent de nous retenir, sans que personne ait jamais songé à les interpréter en termes de décadence du système des cités parce qu'elles ont coïncidé avec l'acmé de la romanité sur le territoire gaulois; c'est une invitation à porter sur les bouleversements apportés par l'Antiquité tardive dans l'organigramme administratif un jugement moins négatif qu'on ne le fait parfois.

Un jugement tout aussi tempéré s'impose si, délaissant le réseau des villes épiscopales pour se tourner vers les villes elles-mêmes, on essaie de mesurer ce qu'a été l'impact de la topographie chrétienne sur le paysage urbain et ce qu'il peut nous apprendre sur l'évolution de la cité antique. Pour cela, je commencerai naturellement par l'*ecclesia*, non seulement parce qu'elle constitue en certaines villes l'unique monument chrétien que l'on puisse appréhender ou deviner par les textes ou l'archéologie, mais surtout parce qu'elle relève d'un phénomène spécifiquement urbain.

L'un des acquis de l'enquête sur la *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule* est en effet d'avoir fait justice des traditions historiographiques, d'ailleurs parfois tributaires d'interprétations du passé chrétien dues aux Anciens eux-mêmes,¹⁷ qui plaçaient dans le *suburbium* les premiers établissements de culte. L'enquête est presque achevée et les cas douteux, comme celui de Dax,¹⁸ se comptent sur les doigts d'une main; en fait, il n'y a pas en Gaule d'exemple avéré de cathédrale qui ait été installée initialement hors les murs et la même chose, soit dit en passant, se vérifie très largement aussi dans les Espagnes et en Italie péninsulaire.¹⁹ C'est dire quel remodelage du paysage proprement urbain a été dû au christianisme, pour l'essentiel dans le courant du V^e siècle, qui est la date généralement retenue pour la plupart des groupes épiscopaux qui sont aujourd'hui connus par des fouilles.²⁰ Ces monuments sont donc souvent postérieurs, et

¹⁶ Pour un panorama d'ensemble, je renvoie à nouveau aux actes du Colloque cité à la n. 12.

¹⁷ Voir *infra*, n. 53.

¹⁸ TCG 13, 40 (L. Maurin, Th. Soulard); voir aussi Guyon/Boissavit-Camus/Souilhac 1992, 424-425.

¹⁹ Voir sur ce point Cantino-Wataghin/Gurt/Guyon 1996, 20-22.

²⁰ Voir sur ce point les trois volumes cités à la n. 3.

parfois de beaucoup, à la création des évêchés, ce qui laisse supposer que longtemps, sans doute, les communautés chrétiennes ont continué à se rassembler dans des 'maisons de prière',²¹ mais le plus singulier est que l'âge d'or du premier art chrétien que leur construction a inauguré coïncide dans l'histoire de l'Occident avec ce 'siècle de fer', qui s'ouvrit, ou presque, sur la prise de Rome et fut prématurément clos par la chute de l'Empire. Est-ce une raison pour penser que la création des *ecclesiae* a marqué dans l'histoire urbaine (et plus généralement, pour en rester au sujet qui nous occupe, dans l'histoire des cités) un tournant que l'on ne pourrait, dans cette optique, que juger fatal? Je ne crois pas que tel soit précisément le cas si l'on considère les implantations des premières cathédrales.

Il y a quelque paradoxe à soutenir ce point de vue si l'on songe à la place qu'ont pu tenir au sein de l'espace urbain ces édifices qui étaient parfois d'une taille considérable: qu'il suffise de songer au cas de Trèves dans le pays qui est notre hôte,²² ou encore, pour une cité assurément plus modeste, à celui Genève, où le groupe épiscopal occupait très largement le quadrant nord-est de la ville remparée, comme l'ont montré les fouilles exemplaires de notre collègue Charles Bonnet au-dessous et alentour de Saint-Pierre²³ [fig. 1]. Des quartiers, voire des pans entiers des villes ont donc été bouleversés (ou remodelés, selon le point de vue que l'on choisira d'adopter) à cause de la création de ces monuments et l'impact sur l'urbanisme a naturellement été plus important encore dans les cas, exceptionnels, de transferts de cathédrales, auxquels je m'attacherai de préférence parce qu'ils sont les mieux à même d'illustrer mon propos.

Je commencerai par le cas d'Auxerre, qui n'est connu que par la documentation littéraire. Le transfert fut ici le fait de l'évêque Amator, qui sut solliciter la générosité d'un notable local de très haute noblesse, Ruptilius – *nobilissimus quidam, nomine Ruptilius, ciuis Autissiodorensis ciuitatis* –, pour qu'il mît à la disposition de l'église l'ample et noble demeure – *amplum atque excelsium domicilium* – qu'il possédait dans la ville et surtout le très vaste terrain alentour, qui était "rempli d'un charme divin" (*latior locus, amoenitate quadam diuali circumseptus*); c'est sur cet emplacement qu'il consacra au Christ la nouvelle église qu'il avait fait élever: *secundum uoti sui initia menta, Christo Deo consecrauit*. À Auxerre ainsi, en ce début du V^e siècle, une demeure aristocratique, qui est sans doute à retrouver sous la cathédrale gothique, s'était muée en groupe épiscopal, sans que disparût pour autant l'ancienne *ecclesia*, qui était proche d'une porte, mais selon toute vraisemblance, elle aussi à l'intérieur des murs.²⁴ Tous ces détails nous sont connus grâce à la *Vita* d'Amator,²⁵ qui nous apprend également que l'évêque dut exercer sur Ruptilius pour obtenir de lui la cession de son bien.

²¹ Pour reprendre l'expression fameuse d'Eus., HE 8.1.5.

²² Pour une rapide mise au point sur le groupe épiscopal de Trèves, voir TCG 1, 22–25 (N. Gauthier).

²³ TCG 3, 43–47 (C. Bonnet/C. Santachi); pour plus de détails sur le groupe épiscopal de Genève, on renverra à la présentation synthétique de Bonnet 1993.

²⁴ TCG 8, 54 (J.-C. Picard).

²⁵ Stephanus Africanus, *Vita S. Amatoris* (BHL 356), AA. SS. Mai., I 50–60.

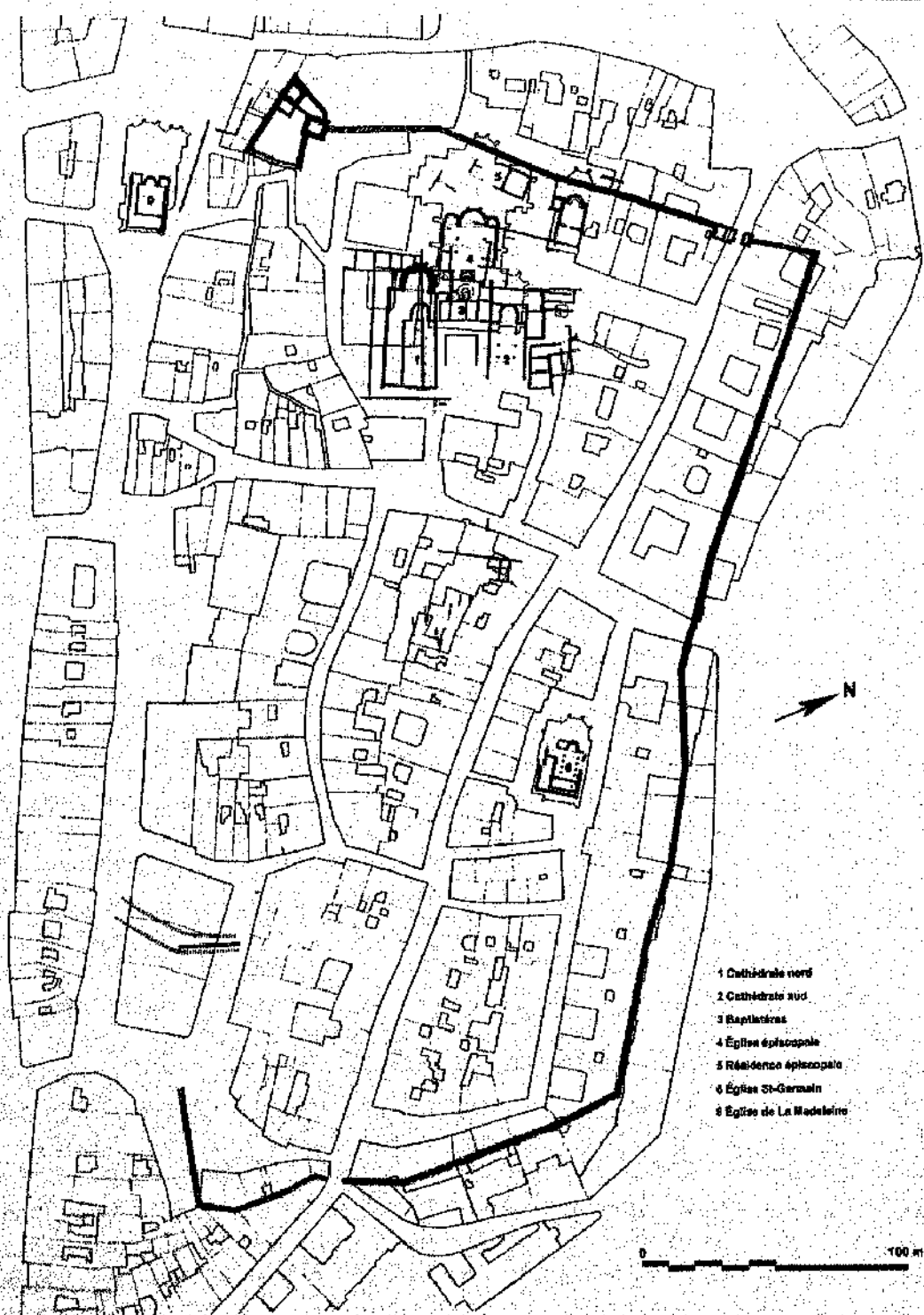


Fig. 1. Plan de Genève, d'après TCG 3, p. 39 (Trait noir: l'enceinte de l'Antiquité tardive); 1. Cathédrale nord; 2. Cathédrale sud; 3. Baptistère; 4. Église épiscopale; 5. Résidence épiscopale; 6. Saint-Germain; 7. La Madeleine.

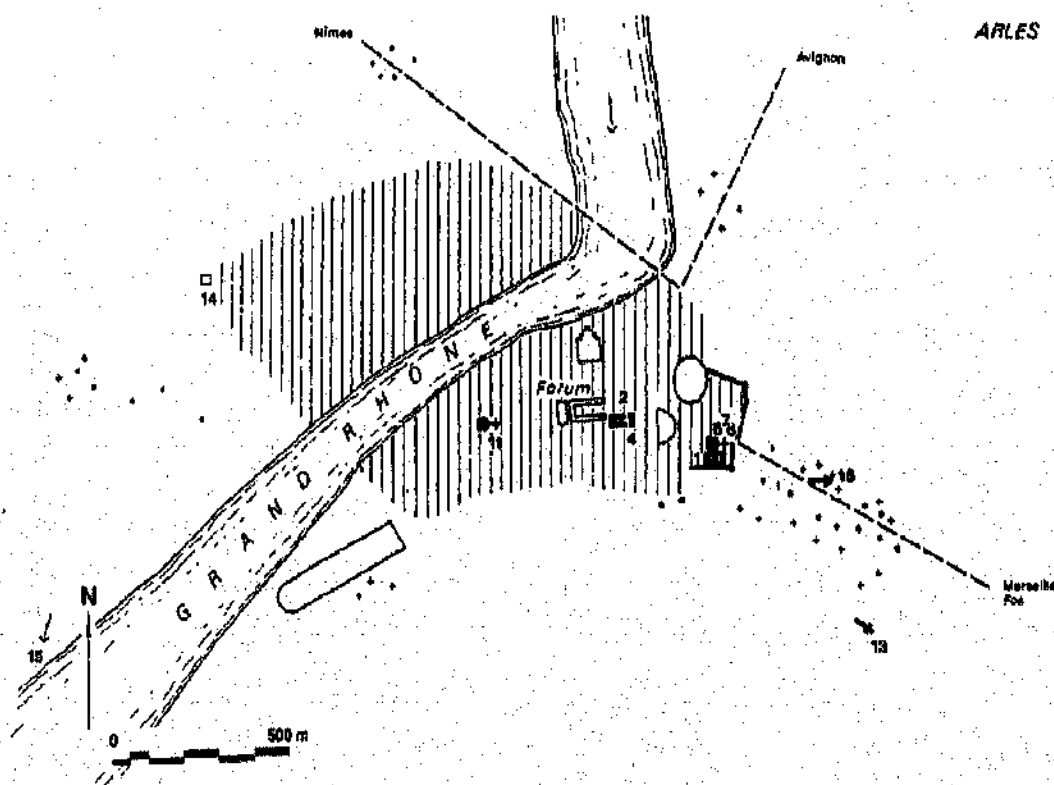


Fig. 2. Plan d'Arles, d'après TCG 3, p. 75 (hachures: aire habitée au Haut Empire; points: nécropoles païennes; croix: nécropoles chrétiennes): 1. Cathédrale primitive, ensuite incluse au VI^e siècle dans le monastère Saint-Jean; 2. Cathédrale du V^e siècle, aujourd'hui primatiale Saint-Trophime; 4. Résidence de l'évêque et de ses clercs; 6-8: édifices de culte du monastère Saint-Jean; 11. Monastère Sainte-Croix; 13. Basilique funéraire de Saint-Genès; 14. Mûrier, puis colonne sur le lieu du martyre de Genès; 15. Monastère suburbain; 16. Basilique funéraire des Apôtres (dessin S. Roucole).

Ce sont d'autres pressions, mais sur la cité elle-même cette fois, qu'il a probablement fallu exercer en deux autres cas qui sont, certainement ou probablement, attestés par les textes ou l'archéologie: celui d'Arles, où la cathédrale a été déplacée au V^e siècle du site périphérique qu'elle occupait au sud-est de la ville vers l'actuelle primatiale Saint-Trophime, donc près du forum, où elle fut élevée au-dessus de restes d'un probable monument public²⁶ [fig. 2], et celui d'Aix-en-Provence, qui a sans doute connu à quelques décennies de distance une semblable évolution. Dans cette dernière ville, les fouilles que j'ai pu conduire en compagnie de Rollins GULD et Lucien RIVET ont en effet montré que l'*ecclesia* antique dont les restes sont conservés au-dessous de la cathédrale romane Saint-Sauveur date seulement des années 500, alors qu'Aix avait sûrement un évêque depuis 408 et probablement depuis 375 au moins, ce qui invite à imaginer ailleurs le premier lieu de culte de la communauté chrétienne – vraisemblablement dans l'angle sud-ouest de l'enceinte, à l'emplacement d'une autre église, dont le nom, Notre-Dame

²⁶ TCG 3, 80 (P.-A. Février); mais sur la topographie chrétienne d'Arles, on devra surtout consulter désormais Heijmans 2004.

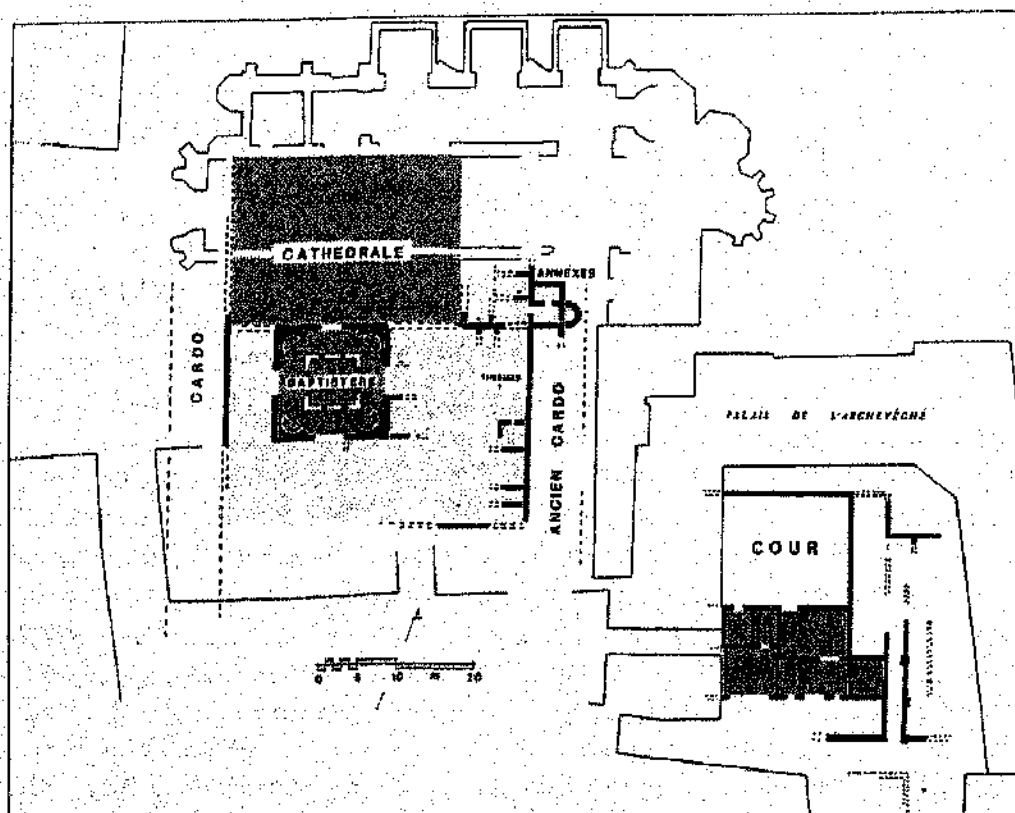
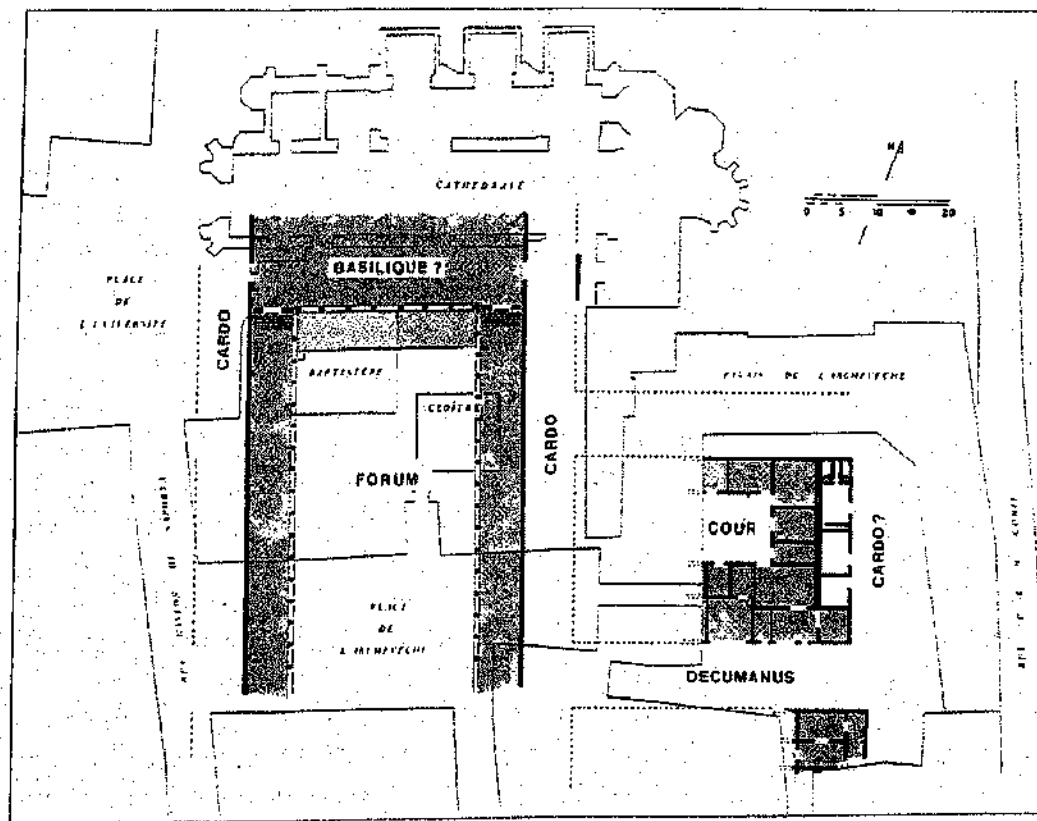


Fig. 3: Le centre monumental d'Aix-en-Provence au I^{er} et au VI^e siècle, d'après PMCF I p. 113 (dessin L. Rivet).

de la Seds (c'est-à-dire Notre-Dame du Siège), peut être significatif, même s'il n'est attesté qu'à partir du XIII^e siècle.²⁷

Le cas d'Aix est particulièrement intéressant pour notre sujet parce que les fouilles ont également montré que l'essentiel du groupe épiscopal avait été construit à l'emplacement d'une grande place publique – peut-être le forum de la cité –, la cathédrale elle-même étant exactement surimposée à un grand édifice public, temple ou plus probablement basilique [fig. 3]. Nul doute donc qu'il y a eu ici une radicale mutation, ou plutôt une véritable métamorphose du paysage urbain, sur laquelle le témoignage de l'archéologie reste pourtant relativement ambigu. Les édifices publics ont été retrouvés en effet très largement spoliés, de leurs colonnes en particulier, et le sol du possible forum et des portiques attenants était jonché de gravats et de restes de repas: faut-il croire que l'ensemble était à l'abandon quand il passa aux mains de la communauté chrétienne, ou doit-on croire que toutes ces données de fouille témoignent d'une récupération des matériaux et d'une fréquentation du site, qui seraient dues, l'une comme l'autre, au chantier de construction du groupe épiscopal?²⁸ Même si je ne cache pas mes préférences pour la seconde solution, il m'est évidemment impossible de trancher.

Que la place eût été abandonnée ou qu'elle fût encore très largement en état aux alentours de 500, il ne me paraît pas douteux en tout cas, même si aucun texte n'en garde trace, qu'à Aix – comme du reste à Arles un demi-siècle auparavant –, l'autorisation de désaffecter des monuments publics pour élever à leur emplacement des édifices de culte chrétiens n'a pu être que le fait du *splendidissimus ordo* de la cité, qui ne s'est d'ailleurs peut-être pas incliné de si bonne grâce. Que l'on songe aux délicates négociations que Mamert de Vienne avait dû mener dans l'intervalle pour instituer à Vienne la fête des Rogations,²⁹ ce qui, pourtant, était un fait de moins grande conséquence que la dévolution à l'Église d'une partie, et non la moindre, du centre monumental d'une cité antique. De tels faits, qui sont avérés pour le dernier et au moins plausibles pour les deux autres, témoignent sans nul doute du poids accru de l'évêque au sein de la société de l'Antiquité tardive, mais ils me semblent également indiquer, comme en creux, le maintien des institutions antiques. Et surtout, la décision de construire de nouvelles *ecclesiae* me paraît être le signe de la splendeur maintenue des cités car depuis que le christianisme était devenu religion officielle de l'Empire, les cathédrales constituaient autant d'édifices publics qui concourraient eux aussi à la parure monumentale des villes.

Si tel n'était pas le cas, on ne comprendrait pas que la construction des groupes épiscopaux ait relevé de cette émulation entre cités, tout autant qu'entre Églises, qui fut, depuis les origines, un des plus puissants moteurs de la vie de l'Empire. De cette émulation témoigne bien, à échelle régionale, le retour récur-

²⁷ TCG 2, 24–26 (J. Guyon).

²⁸ Sur les résultats de ces fouilles, voir PMCF 1, 109–117 (R. Guild/J. Guyon/L. Rivet 1995), mais également Guild/Guyon/Rivet 1980; 1983; 1993/94.

²⁹ Voir à ce sujet l'Hom. VI in *Rogationibus* d'Avit de Vienne (éd. R. Peiper, MGH AA VI 2, p. 108–112).

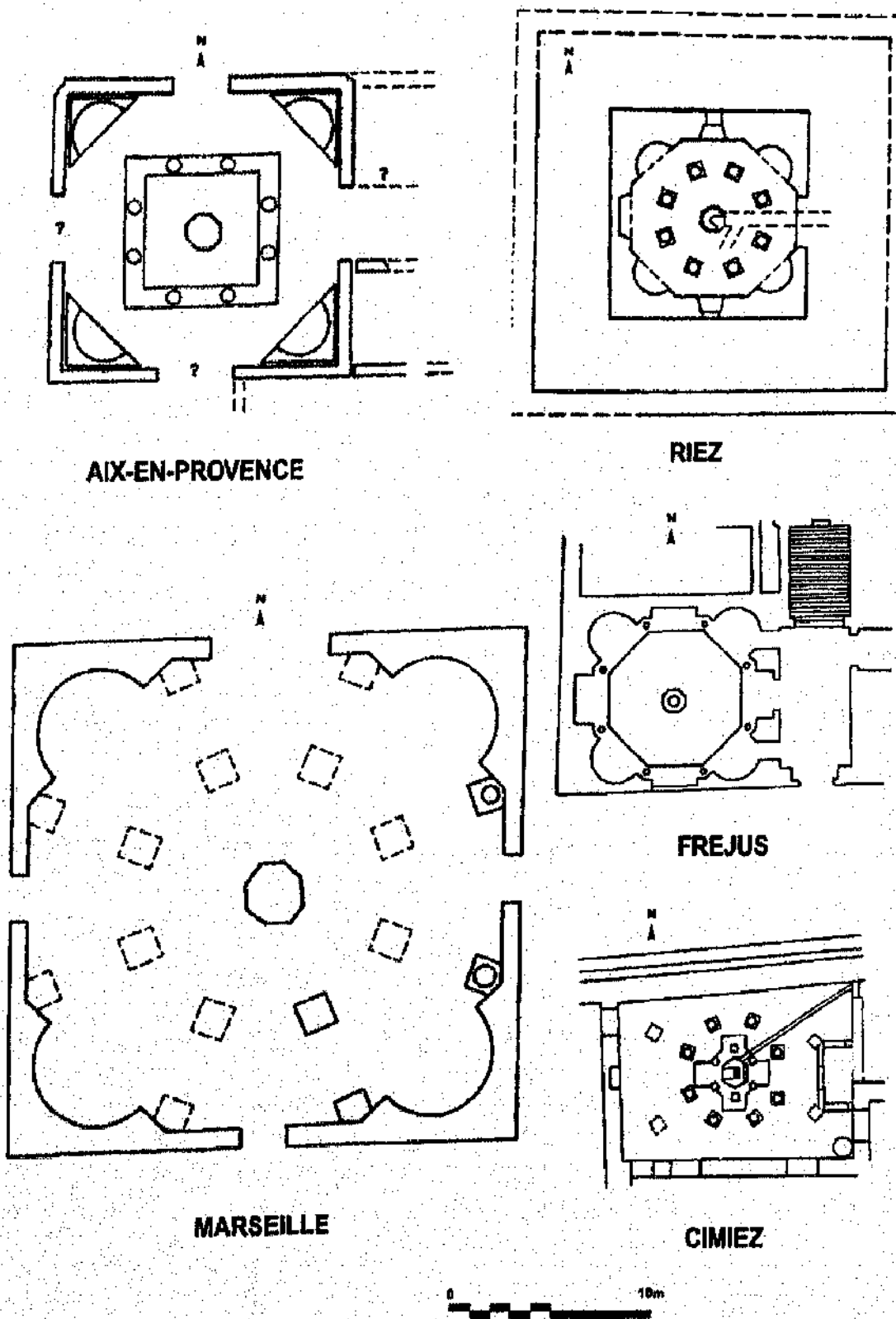


Fig. 4: Les baptistères antiques de Provence à même échelle, d'après Naissance des arts chrétiens, Paris 1991, p. 74-75 (dessin H. Delhumeau).

rent de programmes architecturaux sur lesquels les architectes se sont livrés à de subtiles variations. Qu'il suffise de songer, dans les Alpes, au rapprochement que l'on ne peut pas ne pas faire entre les groupes épiscopaux de Lyon, Genève et Grenoble³⁰ ou encore, dans le Midi, au cas des baptistères de Provence, entre lesquels est clairement perceptible toute une hiérarchie.³¹ Au sein de leur série homogène, il faut en effet distinguer d'une part les baptistères de simples villes épiscopales comme Cimiez, Riez et Fréjus, dont l'emprise au sol est uniformément d'une centaine de mètres carrés, et, de l'autre, celui de la métropole, Aix-en-Provence, qui était deux fois plus vaste, avec ses 15 m de côté (au lieu de 10 dans la série précédente), mais surtout celui, véritablement hors normes, de Marseille, dont l'emprise au sol de 625 m² (soit 25 m de côté pour cet édifice également carré à l'extérieur) n'a d'équivalent en Occident que celle du baptistère de Milan, qui était cité impériale [fig. 4]. Ce primat de Marseille, simple ville épiscopale pourtant, s'explique sans doute par le fait que son Église, au début du V^e siècle, aspirait à régenter tout l'épiscopat provençal, comme le montrent les débats du concile de Turin. On ne peut donc que regretter que l'on ne connaisse de ce monument que ce qu'en a entrevu une fouille, d'ailleurs attentive, du siècle dernier³² et surtout que soient inconnus par l'archéologie les baptistères des deux grandes Églises rivales: Arles, bien entendu, mais également Vienne pour laquelle on ne saurait accorder foi aux restitutions très hypothétiques qui ont parfois été proposées.³³

Les dimensions et, plus encore, le raffinement de ces édifices, qui, tous, étaient richement décorés, donnent la mesure de l'importance qu'avaient pour les cités de l'Antiquité tardive les groupes épiscopaux dont ils faisaient partie. Cela est si vrai que ces groupes épiscopaux ont fréquemment été transformés – et toujours pour être embellis et agrandis –, comme l'ont bien mis en évidence les recherches récentes et particulièrement celles, déjà citées, qui ont été conduites au-dessous et alentour de la cathédrale de Genève. Mais l'exemple de Genève a pour autre mérite de montrer que ces édifices n'étaient pas les seuls, souvent, à avoir été élevés au sein des villes de l'Antiquité tardive [cf. fig. 1], qui comptaient d'autres églises auxquelles il faut maintenant s'intéresser, même si leur interprétation est parfois délicate.

On s'accorde généralement à penser que nombre de ces églises relevaient d'évergésies privées, mais il n'est pas à exclure que certaines aient pu constituer des sortes d'églises stationnales,³⁴ voire de paroisses urbaines avant la lettre: ce pourrait être ainsi le cas à Arles pour la *basilica Constantia*, dans laquelle la *Vita Hilarii* montre l'évêque prenant la parole pour l'homélie d'une façon qui lui était

³⁰ Même si la balance n'est pas égale entre ces trois ensembles monumentaux, dont le mieux connu est, de loin, celui de Genève; voir cependant Beaucheron/Cabayet/Montjoye 1998, fig. 44, 76.

³¹ Sur ce sujet, je me permets de renvoyer pour plus de détails à mon étude. Guyon 1989.

³² Pour ce monument, on devra consulter PMCF 1, 142–146 (J. Guyon) et surtout Roustan 1905, qui est la relation de la fouille du bâtiment en 1854.

³³ Je fais allusion par là à l'article de André/Chalon 1987.

³⁴ Voir sur ce point Saint-Roch 1989.

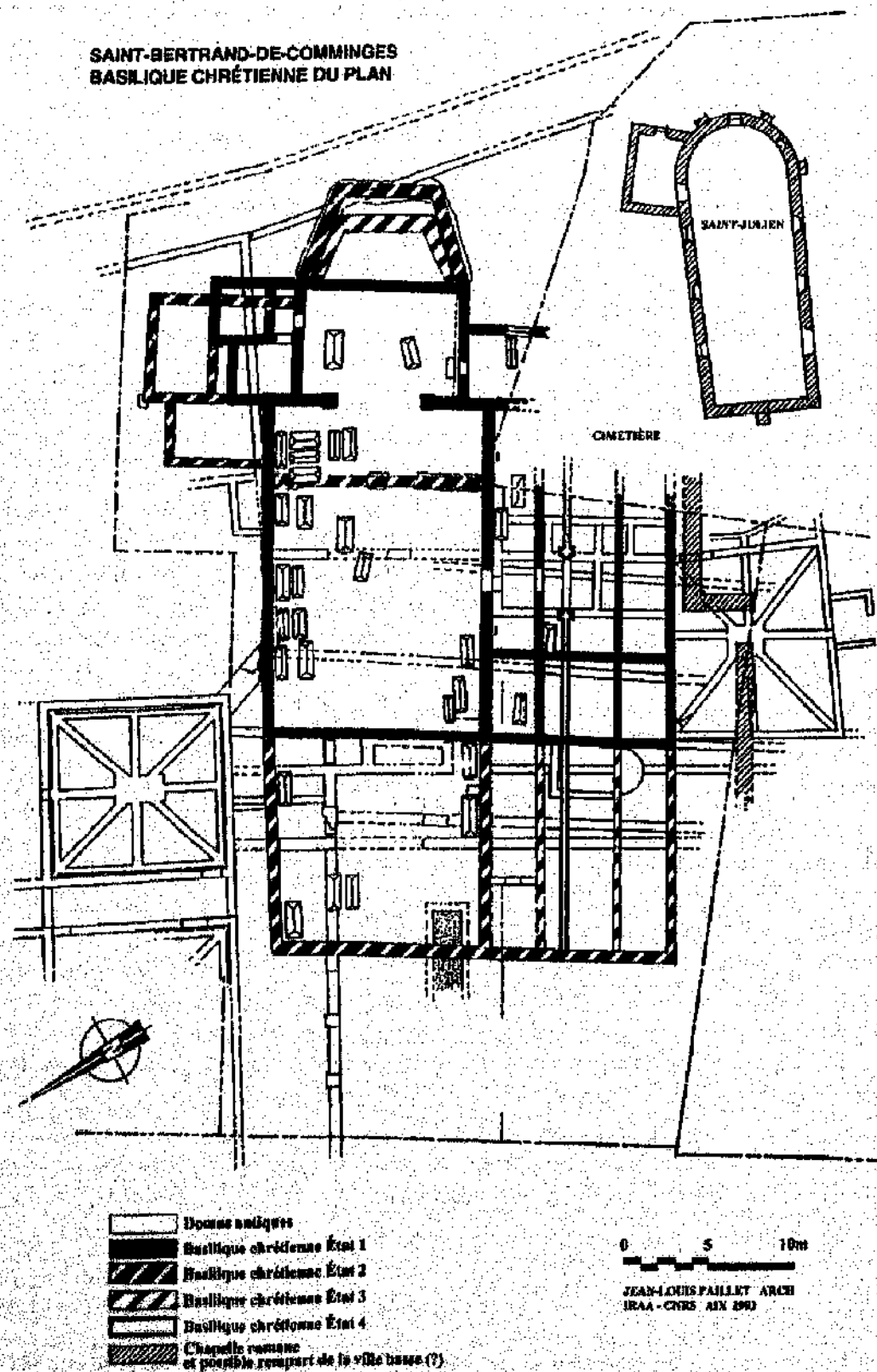


Fig. 5: La basilique chrétienne de Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, installée au V^e siècle sur une domus d'une riche insula au sud du forum vetus de la ville (dessin J.-L. Paillet).

apparemment habituelle.³⁵ Laissons cela, qui nous entraînerait trop loin, pour retenir que comme les cathédrales, ces autres églises urbaines témoignent de la vitalité conservée des cités et du souci qu'avaient toujours les élites qui les ont financées de pourvoir au *decus* de leur petite patrie. Là n'est pas le seul intérêt de ces édifices, dont la construction peut également attester la permanence de tout un habitat alentour dans le cas, en particulier, des déplacements plus ou moins importants de sites urbains qui ont été le fait de l'Antiquité tardive, à cause de l'apparition, au côté de la ville du Haut Empire, d'un habitat de hauteur.

Je retiendrai d'abord comme exemple le cas de Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, le chef-lieu de la *ciuitas Conuenarum*, qui a connu une situation de ce type au moins à partir de la construction, sur la butte qui dominait la ville antique, d'une enceinte que l'on sait désormais, grâce aux travaux de l'équipe britannique à l'œuvre sur le site, devoir être attribuée aux années 400, date ronde.³⁶ Dans la mesure où l'évêché des Convènes paraît lui-même avoir été créé au tournant du V^e siècle, c'est peut-être à pareille époque qu'a été construite l'*ecclesia*, que le témoignage de Grégoire de Tours, à la fin du VI^e siècle, permet sans équivoque de situer également sur la colline.³⁷ Or les recherches que j'ai pu conduire avec toute une équipe dans la ville basse, sur un édifice de culte chrétien qui avait déjà été fouillé pendant l'entre-deux guerres, ont montré que cette basilique avait été construite sensiblement à même époque et, en tout cas, dans la première moitié du V^e siècle, en s'inscrivant d'ailleurs de façon fort discrète au sein d'une *insula* urbaine, particulièrement riche, qui était située en lisière méridionale du *forum uetus* de la ville³⁸ [fig. 5]. Le fait est d'autant plus intéressant qu'à cette même date, les monuments publics et une large part de la ville basse avaient été abandonnés et détruits, en partie peut-être pour servir à la construction du rempart, comme l'ont récemment supposé les fouilleurs.³⁹ Sans la présence de la basilique chrétienne sur le site de piémont, on aurait quelque difficulté à se convaincre que Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges possédait aux V^e et VI^e siècles une structure bipolaire, avec dans la plaine, au pied de la colline remparée, une occupation humaine qui s'étendait certainement encore bien au-delà de la seule *insula* où était la basilique⁴⁰ [fig. 6].

Le même schéma se vérifie sans doute pour une ville comme Riez, qui a connu pendant l'Antiquité tardive un semblable phénomène de perchement, à cette différence près que c'est dans la plaine en ce cas que se trouvait la cathé-

³⁵ Vita S. Hilarii Arelatensis (BHL, 3882) 13 (éd. P.-A. Jacob, SC 404, Paris 1995, p. 120): *dum in basilica Constantia sacra sollemnia celebrantur, productis fontibus caelestium doctrinarum fidelium corda rigaret ...*

³⁶ En attendant la publication définitive de ce rempart, on consultera Jones/Esmonde Cleary/Wood 1996, 1998; Wood 2002.

³⁷ Greg. Tur. Hist. 7.38.

³⁸ Sur cet édifice, dans l'attente d'une publication définitive en préparation, on consultera PMCF 2, 177-189 (J. Guyon/J.-L. Paillet).

³⁹ Pour une approche des fouilles récentes à Saint-Bertrand, voir Collectif 2001/02. Mais aussi, désormais, TCG 13, 68-70 (J. Guyon).

⁴⁰ Sur tous ces points, je me permets de renvoyer, pour plus de détails, à deux de mes travaux récents: Guyon, 2003 et 2004.

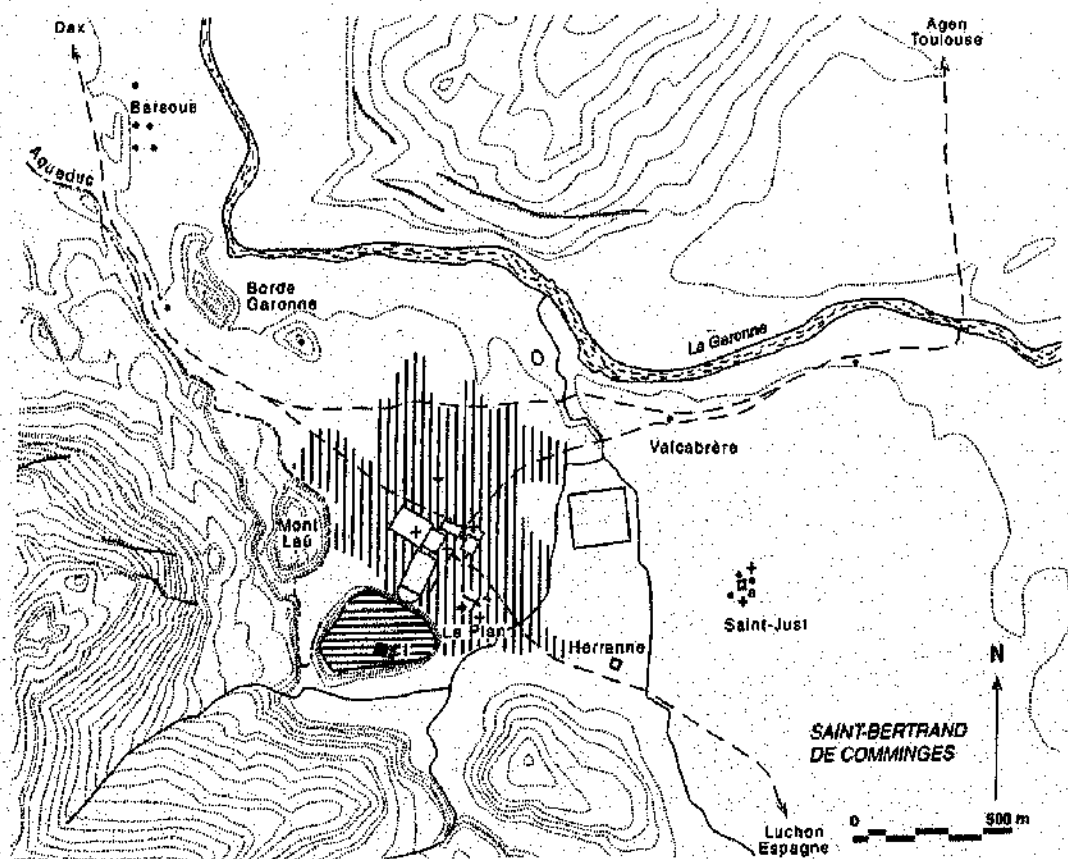


Fig. 6: Plan de Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges (hachures verticales: aire habitée au Haut Empire; hachures horizontales: établissement de l'Antiquité tardive; points: nécropoles païennes; croix: nécropoles chrétiennes): 1. Cathédrale; 4. Basilique du quartier du Plan; a. Saint-Just de Valcabrère (dessin V. Gemonet).

drale et sur la colline qu'a été construite une basilique urbaine⁴¹ [fig. 7]. Nous sommes donc à nouveau en présence d'une structure urbaine bipolaire, dont chaque élément est doté de son église propre, et l'on est d'autant plus fondé ici à considérer ces églises d'un seul coup d'œil que la *Vita* de l'évêque Maxime met en scène son héros faisant le "circuit" de ses basiliques (*basilicas circumibat*),⁴² ce qui était une façon de manifester, jusque par la liturgie, l'unité conservée de la cité. Mais l'exemple le plus éclairant est sans doute fourni par la *ciuitas Consorannorum* parce qu'il y a toute apparence que, dans cette cité, l'établissement perché de l'Antiquité tardive, Saint-Lizier, était situé non pas à proximité immédiate de la ville antique, comme à Riez ou Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, mais à quelque distance, l'agglomération du Haut Empire étant sans doute à imaginer

⁴¹ Sur Riez, consulter la notice publiée dans TCG 2, 35-42 (J. Guyon), qu'il faut cependant amender sur un point: une mélecture de la *Vita* de Maxime m'avait fait considérer que la basilique de la colline était la basilique funéraire du saint; en fait, les restes de ce dernier étaient *extra muros*, dans une autre église.

⁴² *Vita S. Maximi episcopi Relensis* (BHL, 5853; éd. S. Gennaro, Catania 1966, p. 106).

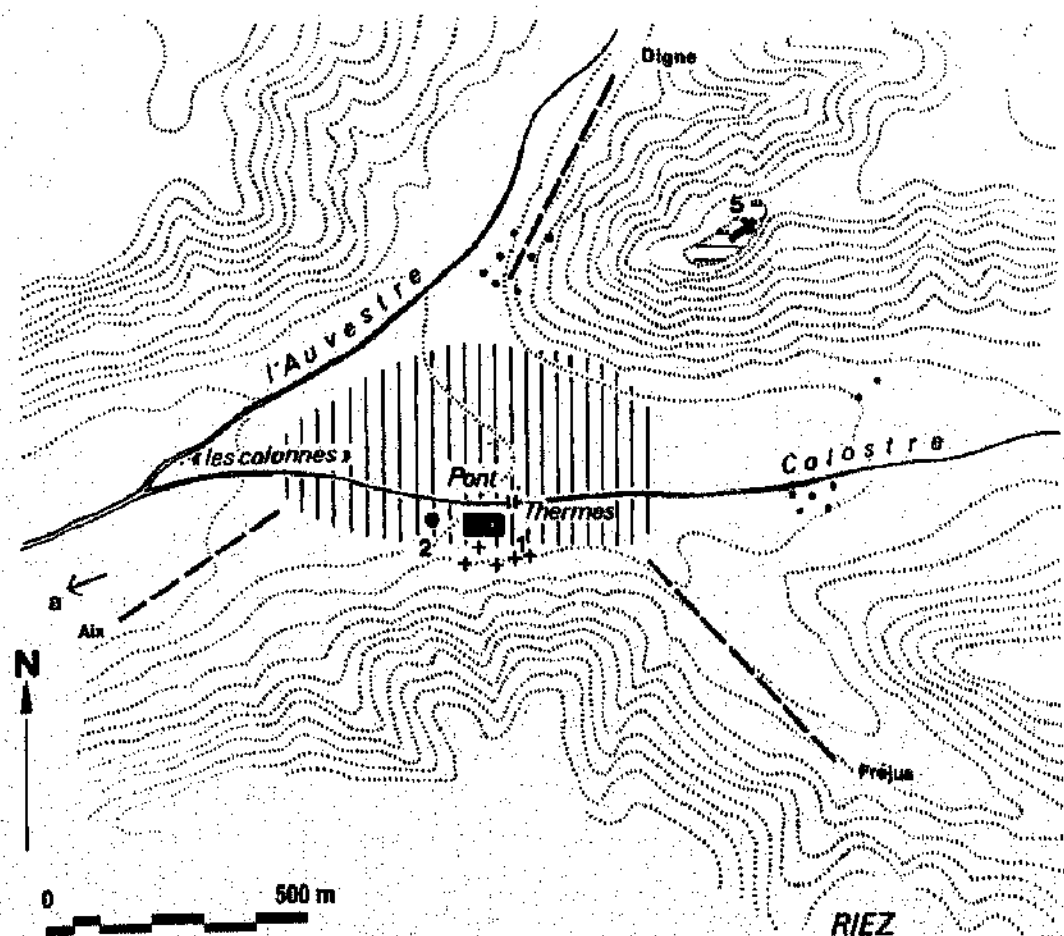


Fig. 7: Plan de Riez, d'après TCG 2, p. 37 (hachures verticales: aire habitée au Haut Empire; hachures horizontales: établissement de l'Antiquité tardive; points: nécropoles païennes; croix: nécropoles chrétiennes): 1. Cathédrale; 2. Baptistère; 5. Saint-Albin; a. Saint-Pierre (dessin S. Roucole).

pour sa part à Saint-Girons, qui est 1,5 km environ plus au sud⁴³ [fig. 8]. Or Saint-Lizier est célèbre à cause de ses deux églises romanes que l'on a souvent qualifiées improprement de 'concathédrales', Notre-Dame de la Sède (c'est-à-dire à nouveau Notre-Dame du Siègle) sur la hauteur et Saint-Lizier au pied de la butte, et bien que la preuve manque, il serait séduisant d'imaginer pour ces édifices une origine antique. Si tel était bien le cas, le schéma d'une ville bipolaire se vérifierait à nouveau; pour autant, cette bipolarité ne résulterait pas ici de la juxtaposition d'une ville de plaine du Haut Empire et d'un habitat de hauteur de l'Antiquité tardive, mais de la naissance, pendant l'Antiquité tardive, d'une ville perchée, puis d'un probable faubourg. Si modestes qu'aient pu être ces habitats – le rempart de Saint-Lizier est en effet bien exigu et l'on ignore tout de l'étendue du possible faubourg –, ils n'en constitueraient pas moins un nouveau témoignage de la vitalité des villes gauloises au cours de la période.

⁴³ TCG 13, 83–93 (J. Guyon); voir également Escudé-Quillet/Maissan 1997, spécialement 39–49, 138–143, 150–160.

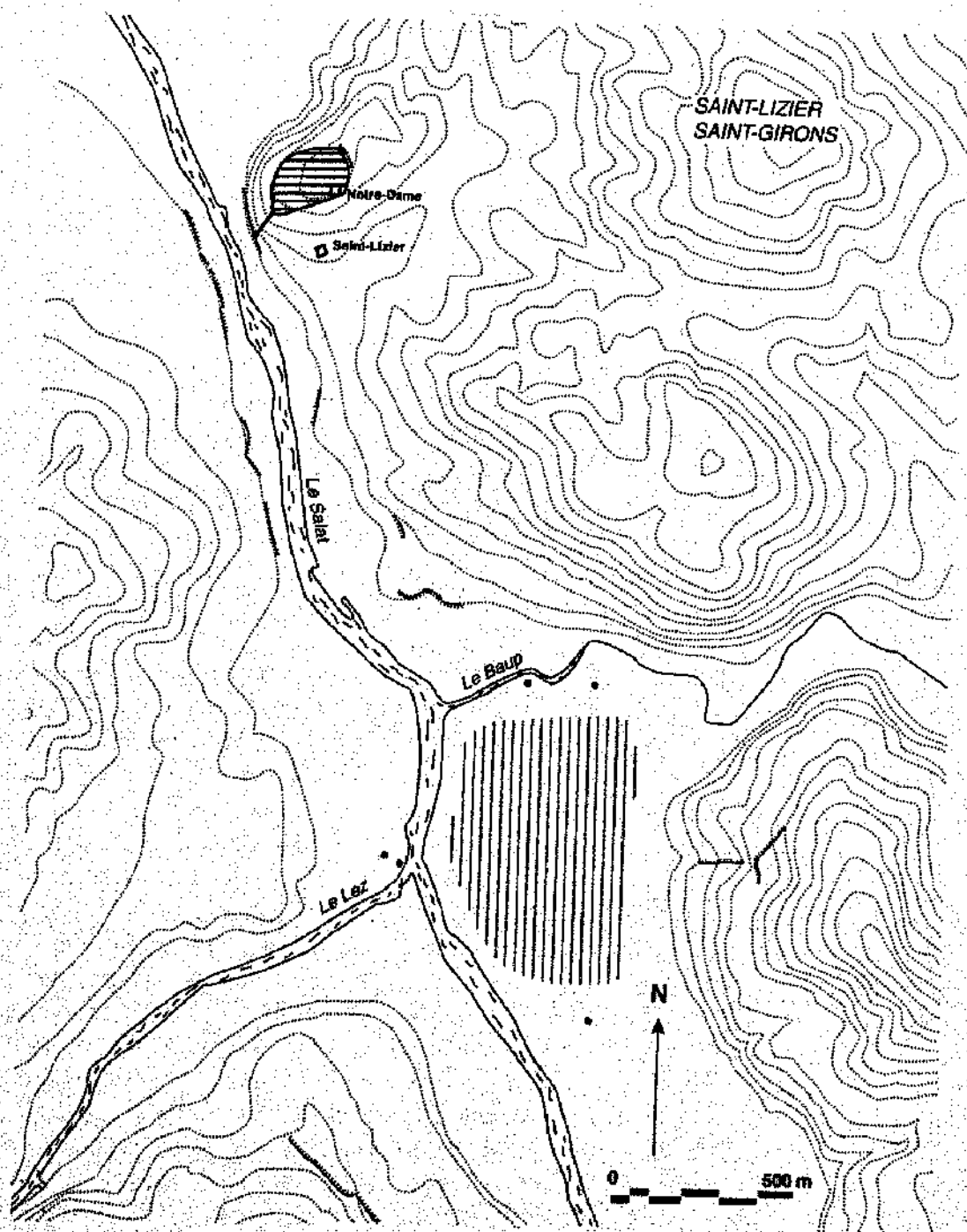


Fig. 8: Plan de Saint-Girons et Saint-Lizier (hachures verticales: aire habitée au Haut Empire; hachures horizontales: établissement de l'Antiquité tardive; points: nécropoles païennes; croix: nécropoles chrétiennes): a. Notre-Dame-de la Sède; b. Saint-Lizier (dessin V. Gémouet).

Pour en terminer avec la topographie chrétienne, il me faut maintenant dire un mot des monastères, qui répondaient à une réalité ecclésiale particulièrement importante pendant l'Antiquité tardive puisque quelque 180 communautés mo-

nastiques, au sens le plus large de ce terme (y compris, par exemple, les cellules d'ermites ou de reclus), figurent dans le recensement encore provisoire que les Prof. Jacques BIARNE et Michèle GAILLARD ont entrepris pour le volume de synthèse en préparation qui constituera le dernier fascicule de la *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule*.

Ce nombre élevé ne doit pas faire illusion cependant car beaucoup de villes, notamment en Gaule méridionale, ne comptaient aucun monastère et nombre de ces établissements, en outre, appartiennent plus au haut Moyen Âge qu'à l'Antiquité tardive qui seule, nous intéresse ici. Je passerai donc rapidement, à la fois pour ne pas déflorer les conclusions de cette enquête encore en cours et surtout parce que, dans leur quasi-totalité, ces monastères ne sont pour nous que des noms. Le seul établissement qui soit connu par l'archéologie est en effet celui de Saint-Cybard d'Angoulême,⁴⁴ de sorte que l'on ignore tout de l'impact qu'a pu avoir sur la topographie urbaine la création des monastères, à l'exception peut-être des fondations destinées aux moniales, qui étaient soumises à une clôture très stricte. L'exemple le plus éclairant en la matière est sans doute fourni par les deux établissements de Saint-Jean d'Arles, que l'évêque Césaire avait créé pour sa sœur Césaire, et de Sainte-Croix de Poitiers, fondation de la reine Radegonde, qui avait emprunté à Césaire sa règle et jusqu'à la topographie de son monastère. Dans les deux cas en effet, les bâtiments conventuels sont situés en lisière sud-est de la ville, contre le rempart, dans une position dominante par rapport à l'église funéraire des moniales, qui était dans la nécropole voisine⁴⁵ [cf. fig. 2], et les murs qui entouraient ces établissements faisaient d'eux autant de 'villes dans la ville', ce qui, pour le coup, évoque déjà des réalités médiévales.

Le même jugement vaudrait hors les murs pour les tombes qui se pressaient alentour des basiliques funéraires ou martyriales, comme autant de prodromes du cimetière chrétien qui n'a connu, on le sait, sa forme canonique en Occident qu'à partir de l'époque carolingienne.⁴⁶ Pour autant, ces basiliques du *suburbium* relevaient de canons antiques et elles donnaient aux abords de la ville un caractère monumental qu'ils n'avaient dans la plupart des cas jamais connu à un tel degré car leurs dimensions l'emportaient généralement, et de beaucoup, sur celles des monuments funéraires de l'époque classique. Ces églises sont trop connues pour que je m'attarde longuement sur elles; je voudrais seulement souligner d'un mot l'extrême variété des types architecturaux auxquels ont eu recours leurs constructeurs. Car si certaines sont relativement banales, comme la grande basilique funéraire qui a été reconnue naguère aux portes de Viviers et dont la seule originalité est de présenter une grande abside outrepassée,⁴⁷ d'autres *martyria* sont

⁴⁴ Sur cet édifice, voir TCG 10, 50-51 (B. Boissavit-Camus/P. Pergola/P. Saint-Roch) et surtout Boissavit-Camus 1991.

⁴⁵ Sur Saint-Jean d'Arles, consulter TCG 3, 81 (P.-A. Février), à amender par l'étude de Heijmans 2004, qui prouve avec de bons arguments que, contrairement à ce que pensait Février, la basilique funéraire des sœurs était sans doute *extra muros*; sur Sainte-Croix de Poitiers, voir TCG 10, 84-85 (B. Boissavit-Camus) et pour la basilique funéraire Sainte-Marie, qui dépendait du couvent, *ibid.*, 87-88.

⁴⁶ Voir à ce sujet la belle thèse de Treffort 1996.

⁴⁷ Pour cet édifice, consulter PMCF 1, 218-223 (J. Bruno-Dupraz 1995).

beaucoup plus originaux, comme Saint-Victor de Marseille avec sa puissante élévation,⁴⁸ ou Saint-Laurent de Grenoble et ses multiples absides polylobées⁴⁹ – deux monuments que j'associe à dessein car ils se dressaient également face à la ville, sur la rive sud du port pour l'un, sur la rive droite de l'Isère pour l'autre, comme autant de signaux auxquels répondait sur l'autre rive les masses imposantes des groupes épiscopaux de ces deux cités.⁵⁰

Le choix de telles implantations manifestait une volonté délibérée de christianiser l'espace urbain et extra-urbain, dont témoignent bien également les écrits du temps. Je n'en donnerai qu'un exemple, sans doute le plus éclairant; il provient d'un sermon du prétendu *Eusebius Gallicanus* – peut-être Hilaire d'Arles ou Fauste de Riez dans le cas présent –, qui a été prononcé en l'honneur du martyr arlésien Genès, auquel étaient consacrées à Arles deux églises, l'une sur la rive droite du Rhône, dans le quartier de Trinquetaille, où était le lieu de son martyre, et l'autre sur la rive gauche, dans la nécropole des Alyscamps, où était sa tombe [cf. fig. 2]: "Voici que sa gloire jette un égal honneur sur l'une et l'autre partie de la ville", a tenu à souligner l'orateur, qui avait apparemment pris la parole aux Alyscamps; il ajoute en effet: "cette rive-là, il la sanctifie par son triomphe, celle-ci par sa tombe; celle-là, c'est par son sang qu'il l'illustre, et celle-ci par son corps" (*Unde nunc inter utrasque partes urbis gemino honore gloriosus; illam ripam triumpho sanctificat, hanc sepulcro; illam sanguine illustrat, hanc corpore*).⁵¹ C'est assez dire combien le programme architectural qui avait conduit à élever une basilique martyriale dans chacun des quartiers d'"Arles la double"⁵² participait d'une idéologie nouvelle, car il devait tout au christianisme; dans son esprit cependant, un tel programme était-il si différent des partis urbanistiques que l'on soupçonne sous les créations monumentales d'époque impériale qui visaient, elles aussi, à traduire dans l'espace une idéologie propre à fédérer le corps des citoyens?

Avec ces basiliques funéraires et martyriales, j'en ai terminé avec cette présentation, forcément rapide, des différents éléments constitutifs d'une topographie chrétienne, qui ont, chacun à leur façon, contribué à remodeler le paysage des villes de l'Antiquité tardive. En certains cas, d'ailleurs, la multiplication des monuments de culte chrétiens a été telle que c'est moins d'un remodelage que d'une véritable métamorphose qu'il faudrait parler. Ainsi à Clermont ou Tours, par exemple, où la densité de ces établissements était si grande *extra muros* qu'elle avait donné naissance à tout un "bourg chrétien", *vicus christianorum*⁵³

⁴⁸ PMCF 1, 125–141 (G. Démians d'Archimbaud et al.).

⁴⁹ PMCF 1, 239–244 (R. Colardelle).

⁵⁰ Pour le groupe épiscopal de Marseille, voir PMCF 1, 142–146 (J. Guyon), à compléter désormais par l'étude de Paone/Bouiron 2001 et pour celui de Grenoble, PMCF 1, 230–232 (N. Duval 1995).

⁵¹ Eusebius Gallicanus, *Sermo de vita sancti Genesii* (BHL, 3306) 5 (éd. F. Glorie, CCL CIA, Turnholt, 1971, p. 652).

⁵² *Duplex Arlas*: Auson., *Ordo urbium nobilium* 10.73.

⁵³ L'expression revient chez Grégoire de Tours, à la fois pour Clermont (Hist. 1.33) et pour Tours (Hist. 10.31.1), à propos de ces quartiers périphériques où sont les tombes des martyrs, et

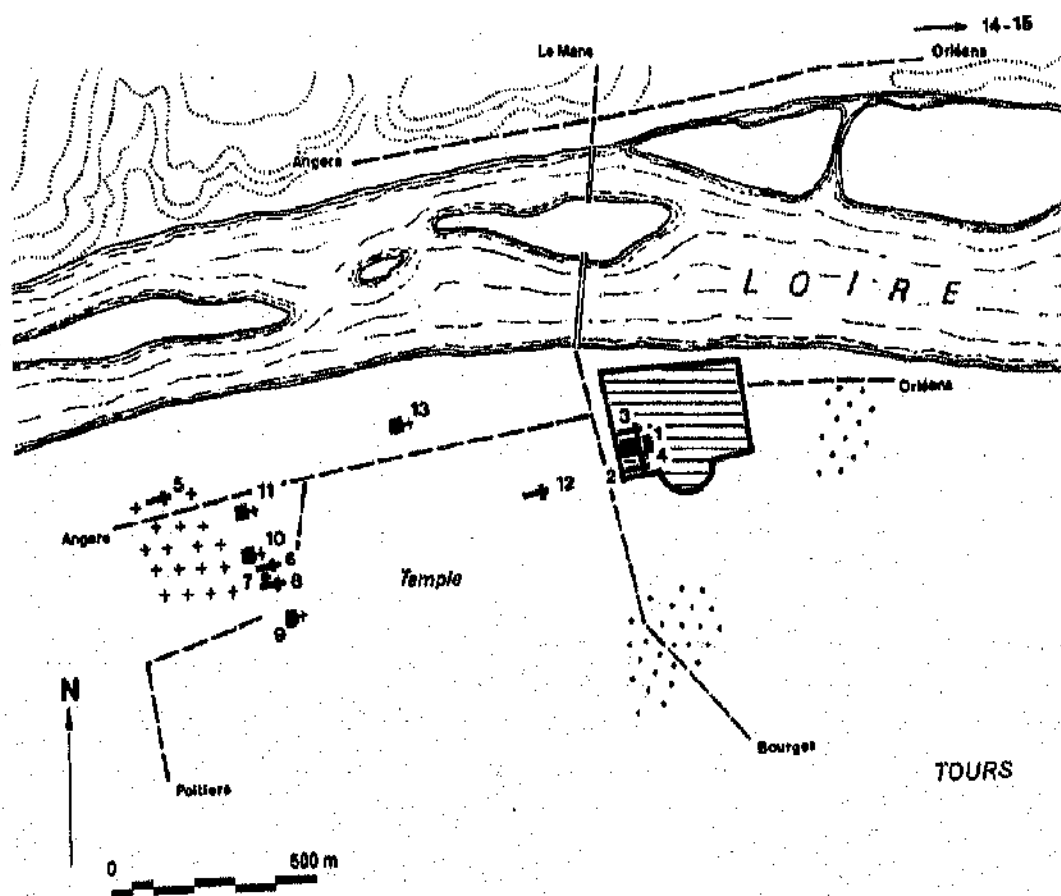


Fig. 9: Plan de Tours, d'après TCG 5, p. 21 (hachures horizontales: établissement de l'Antiquité tardive; points: nécropoles païennes; croix: nécropoles chrétiennes): 1-4. Groupe épiscopal; 5-11. Édifices du *vicus christianorum* (5. *Basilica sancti Litorii*; 6-7. Basilique, atrium et annexes de Saint-Martin; 8. Basilique des Apôtres; 9. Monastère de Saint-Venance; 10. Monastère d'hommes; 11. *Cellula* de Monegundis); 12. Saint-Vincent; 13. Basilique et monastère de Saint-Julien; 14-15. Marmoutier (dessin S. Roucole).

[fig. 9 et 10]. Il resterait à tirer de cette topographie un bilan plus général, et c'est à quoi s'emploie présentement l'équipe en charge de la *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule*, en préparant le fascicule en forme de conclusion auquel j'ai déjà fait allusion. Lorsque ce travail aura été mené à terme, sans doute sera-t-il possible de se livrer, à propos de la Gaule mérovingienne, à un exercice analogue à celui qu'avait pratiqué naguère le Prof. Christian GOUDINEAU pour la Gaule du Haut Empire, en esquissant une hiérarchie entre les cités à partir notamment du nombre des monuments publics et des édifices de spectacle qu'elles comptaient,⁵⁴ car les monuments chrétiens ne sont pas moins signifiants pour l'Antiquité tardive que ces autres édifices pouvaient l'être pour l'époque impériale: ils

qu'il identifie aussi aux tout premiers lieux de la mission chrétienne: de telles identifications n'ont pas peu fait pour répandre dans l'historiographie l'idée que les premières cathédrales étaient à recherche *extra muros*.

⁵⁴ Goudineau 1980, 387-390.

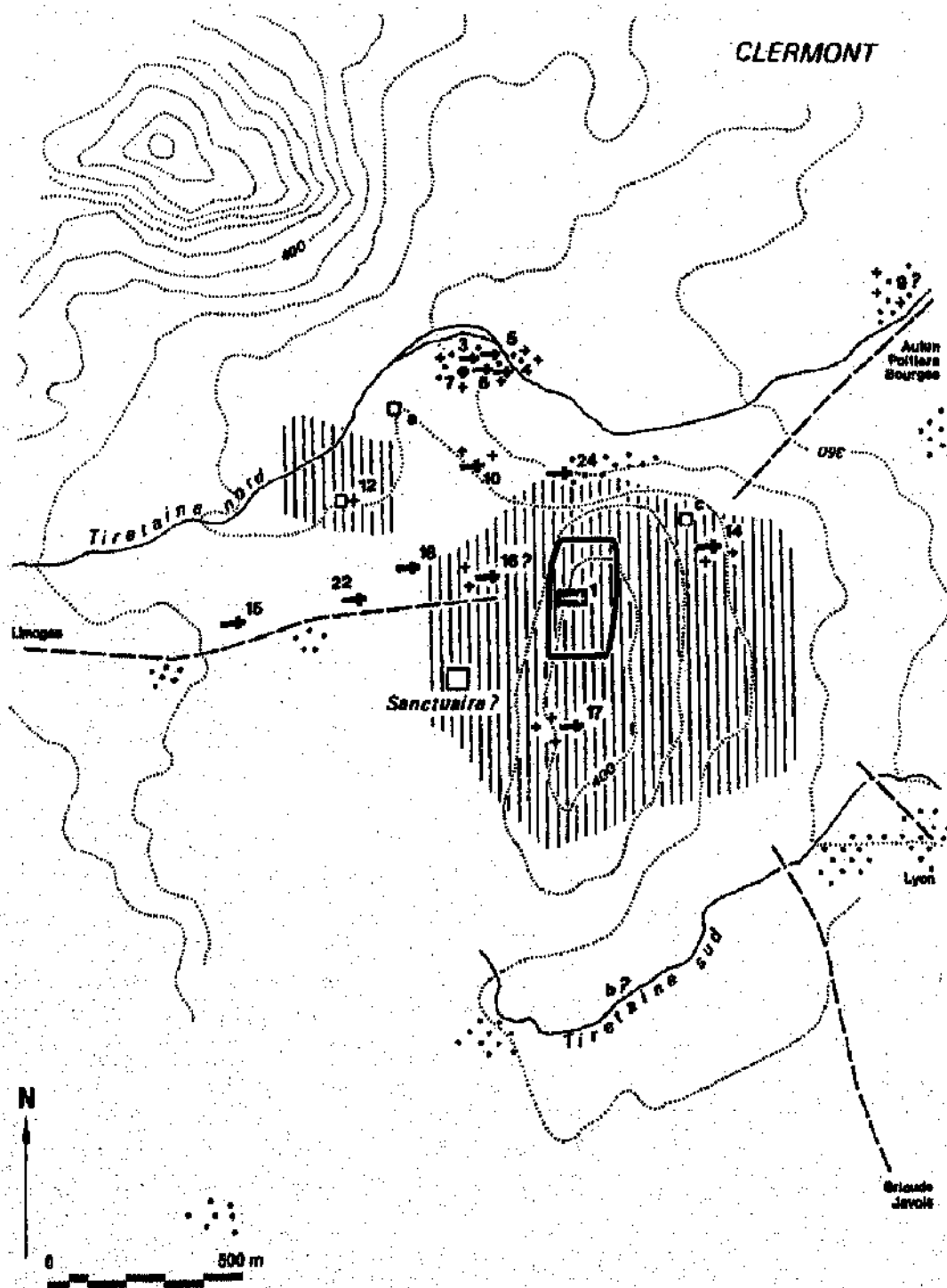


Fig. 10: Plan de Clermont, d'après TCG 6, p. 29 (hachures verticales: aire habitée au Haut Empire; points: nécropoles païennes; croix: nécropoles chrétiennes; trait noir: l'enceinte de l'Antiquité tardive - début V^e siècle?): 1. Cathédrale; 3-7. Édifices de culte du *uicus christianorum* (3. Saint-Alyre; 4. Saint-Vénérand; 6. Saint-Cassius; 7. Baptistère); 9. Crypte funéraire de l'évêque Urbicus; 10. Saint-Étienne; 12. Monastère Saint-Cyr; 14. Saint-Laurent; 15. Saint-André; 16. Saint-Pierre; 17. Saint-Symphorien; 18. Saint-Adiutor; 22. *Xenodochium* (dessin S. Roucole).

leur ont proprement succédé pour parfaire et renouveler tout à la fois la parure monumentale des cités.

Mais pour répondre à l'esprit du Colloque qui nous réunit autour du livre du Prof. Wolf LIEBESCHUETZ, il resterait surtout à définir ce qu'il fallait entendre alors par le mot de 'cité'. Pour le V^e et le VI^e siècle, nul doute que ce mot recouvrait encore une réalité bien tangible. Il me semble en avoir donné un sûr indice par ce que je crois avoir été le contexte des transferts des cathédrales d'Arles et d'Aix, respectivement dans la première moitié du V^e siècle et au tout début du VI^e siècle, et s'il était besoin d'une preuve supplémentaire, il n'est que de songer, pour la fin du VI^e siècle cette fois, à l'ensemble de l'œuvre de Grégoire de Tours. Les cités, autant que les Églises, sont omniprésentes en effet chez Grégoire, de sorte que l'on ne saurait douter que l'idéal de la cité constituait encore pour lui une sorte d'"horizon indépassable", comme aurait dit SARTRE: en est témoin la célèbre description qu'il a laissée de Dijon, de son enceinte, de ses ressources naturelles si variées (sans d'ailleurs, on le notera, que le moindre édifice de culte chrétien figure dans ce tableau), avant de conclure tout uniment: "J'ignore pourquoi cette localité n'a pas été qualifiée de cité".⁵⁵ Grégoire cependant était tout entier tourné vers une réalité autre, d'ordre eschatologique, dont témoigne l'attention qu'il a apportée à noter, à la fin de chaque épisode de ses *Histoires*, tremblements de terre, inondations et autres catastrophes qui annonçaient pour lui le proche retour de son Seigneur, mais pour parodier un mot fameux de LOISY sur la naissance de l'Église, qui a mis fin à une autre espérance eschatologique, s'il attendait ainsi la fin des temps, c'est pourtant la Chrétienté médiévale qui est advenue.

Quelque chose a changé en effet après Grégoire, et pas seulement parce que sa disparition nous a privés d'une source de renseignements irremplaçable. Dans les Gaules et, plus généralement, dans une large part de l'Occident, le tournant des années 600 a sûrement inauguré des temps nouveaux, comme j'avais eu l'occasion de le noter à propos de Rome lors d'un Colloque tenu à Nanterre, où, déjà, j'avais le plaisir de dialoguer avec les Prof. Jens-Uwe KRAUSE, Wolf LIEBESCHUETZ et Claude LEPELLEY.⁵⁶ Les cités, alors, disparaissent peu à peu de notre champ d'observation; elles ne reparaîtront, mais sous une tout autre forme, qu'à l'âge roman. Et ce n'est certainement pas un hasard si leur renaissance a coïncidé avec l'apparition du "blanc manteau d'églises" qui a alors recouvert, aux dires d'un contemporain, l'ensemble de l'Occident car ce manteau, pour une large part, n'était que le ravaudage de la vêtue des édifices de culte hérités du premier art chrétien, à commencer par les *ecclesiae*. C'est autour des cathédrales en effet, on le sait bien, que le plus souvent, les cités sont renées après l'étiage du Haut Moyen Âge.

"Étiage": c'est sur ce mot emprunté à mon maître Henri-Irénée MARROU⁵⁷ que je voudrais rester, parce qu'il me paraît le mieux à même de répondre aux interrogations qui sont les nôtres. Ce n'est pas que je récuse ce *Decline and Fall*

⁵⁵ Greg. Tur. Hist. 3.19.

⁵⁶ Guyon 1996.

⁵⁷ Le terme était familier à H.-I. Marrou; il est significatif qu'il l'ait repris comme titre d'un chapitre de son dernier livre (Marrou 1977, 147-148).

de la cité antique que le Prof. Wolf LIEBESCHUETZ, après GIBBON, a magistralement illustré: je crois avoir dit à l'instant que c'est "sous une tout autre forme" que la cité a repris vie à époque romane. Ni que je trouve infondés les termes de l'alternative "Niedergang oder Wandel?" qui a été proposée à notre réflexion par le Prof. Jens-Uwe KRAUSE et le Dr. Christian WITSCHÉL, d'autant que le surtitre, "Die Stadt in der Spätantike", en faisant explicitement référence à l'Antiquité tardive, invitait bien, pour citer à nouveau H.-I. MARROU, à voir dans cette Antiquité "une autre Antiquité, une autre civilisation, qu'il faut apprendre à reconnaître dans son originalité, à juger par elle-même et non à travers les canons des âges antérieurs".⁵⁸ Et à choisir entre ces deux termes, "Niedergang" et "Wandel", est-il besoin de dire que mes préférences vont au second, car tout, dans l'évolution que j'ai essayé de retracer, me paraît devoir être interprété plutôt en termes de mutation que de décadence?

"Mutation", cependant, renvoie implicitement à un "après", ce qui conduit à considérer le phénomène dans la longue durée. Et vu sous cet angle, c'est bien le terme d'"étiage" qui paraît s'imposer. Après les transformations qui les avaient métamorphosées tout au long de l'Antiquité tardive, oui, les cités ont bien connu au haut Moyen Âge un étiage. Et le principal élément qui reste pour nous visible dans les basses eaux de cet étiage tient le plus souvent aux monuments chrétiens qu'il me revenait ici d'illustrer.

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⁵⁸ Ibid., 13.

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The Late Roman City in Spain

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The late imperial history of Spanish cities tends to be viewed in terms of decline, as is the case in most of the Latin provinces. The traditional interpretative paradigm for Spain suggests that a generalized crisis of the third century made it impossible for *curiae* to maintain the infrastructure of their cities and caused a decline in the civic patriotism of *curiales*. In consequence, cities decayed, their monumental architecture crumbled, and the epigraphic habit disappeared. The fourth century began with a slate wiped clean by barbarian invasion and the flight of Hispano-Roman elites from the cities. Hispano-Roman society had undergone a stark process of *ruralización*, in which the dominant stratum of society shifted its primary residence and favoured zone of display from city to country. The political centre of gravity moved along with the local elites, which killed the glorious urbanism of the Flavian and Antonine era and created a new world. In this late antique Spain, wealth, power and culture were rural, divorced from cities whose only role was to house bishops and imperial officials. This model, in the main a product of the 1960s, has continued to inform not just Spanish historical literature but also recent works of synthesis in other languages.¹

The old view has been perpetuated by many decades of archaeological research which explicitly linked material findings to a chronology drawn from the sparse narrative evidence, for instance the invasion of southern Spain by Moors during the reign of Marcus Aurelius; the invasion of barbarians from the Rhineland into a corner of northeastern Spain in c. 260; the Diocletianic reforms of the 290s; the invasion of Vandals, Alans and Suevi in 409.² When sites are excavated, dated, and published according to a framework derived from the literary evidence, they cannot help but confirm it. Unfortunately, however, this evidentiary interaction has produced a circularity of argument that underpins most studies of late Roman Spain: much of the material evidence seems to confirm old historical interpretations precisely because it was excavated and published in the belief that those interpretations were correct. It has, however, become possible to escape from this trap, with the recent growth of archaeological methods that date their stratigraphy on purely material grounds and that are published in such a way that the excavator's assumptions and hypotheses are transparent to the reader. In many Spanish cities, the material record now pro-

¹ Balil 1970 is the most concise statement of the original model. For a modern textbook account, see, e.g., Montenegro et al. 1986 and the many works of J.M. Blázquez. Liebeschuetz 2001, 74–103 relies almost entirely upon the faulty archaeological analyses of the 1970s for his treatment of Spain. There is a good survey of crisis models in Cepas 1997, 24–27.

² For the Mauri, see HA v. Marci 21.1, with Arce 1981. For the barbarian invasion under Gallienus, see Aur. Vict. 33.3; Eutr. 8.8.2; Jerome, s.a. 2280 (ed. Helm, 221); Oros. 7.41.2.

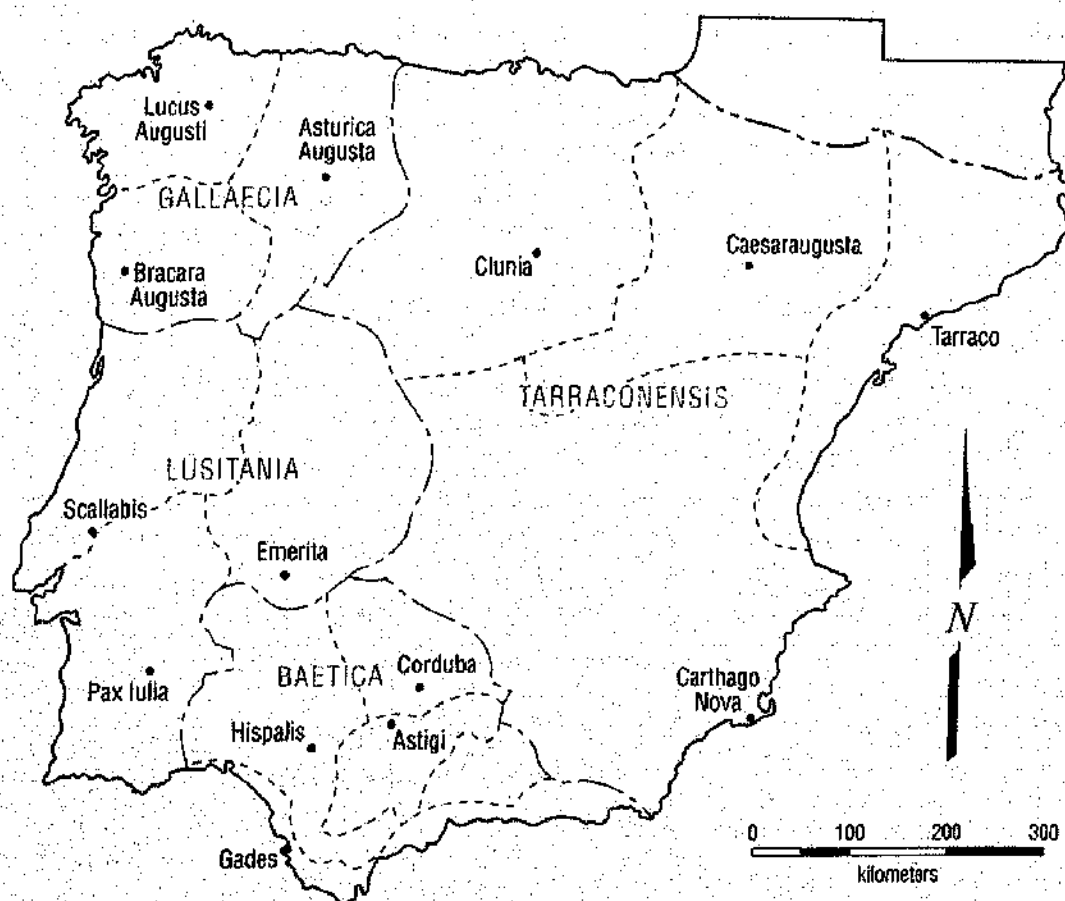


fig. 1: Spain, showing the *conventus* boundaries.
(All maps by the University of Tennessee Cartographic Laboratory under the direction of Will Fontanez).

vides not a supplement to traditional textual sources, but rather an alternative source of evidence independent of them. This material record can be studied on its own terms before being brought into dialogue with other sources. The process of doing this has completely revolutionized our understanding of Spanish history.³

The social and political landscape of Roman Spain was formed over a long period of two hundred years, beginning with the first Roman intervention in the peninsula at the start of the Second Punic War in 218 BC. The first Roman commanders in Spain found a very diverse territory which, in some ways, never lost the regional distinctions already present at the beginnings of the Roman conquest. The Mediterranean and western coasts, as well as the great river valleys of the south and east, had long traditions of Hellenistic, Punic, and indigenous urbanism. Because of this, these regions always remained somewhat different culturally from the peninsular interior, and particularly the North and the North-west, where the Romans brought urbanism as a novelty.⁴ Such differences began

³ For an extensive demonstration of the hypotheses outlined here, see Kulikowski 2004.

⁴ For a brief overview of Republican history, see Richardson 1996, 1–149. For pre-Roman

to diminish in the reign of Augustus, when the peninsula was organized into fourteen *conventus* and the three provinces of Lusitania, Baetica and Tarraconensis [see map 1].⁵ Within this administrative framework, the landscape of Spain came to be urbanized. The creation or reorganization of cities – which is the aspect of Romanization most visible in the material record – was a deliberate part of Augustan policy, to ensure the stability of a region whose remoter corners had only been fully pacified in the 20s BC.⁶ Competition among the various cities within this Augustan network fed directly into the process of Romanization. Competition for Roman law status, in particular, fuelled the physical processes of urban development, as those cities that possessed Roman law status felt the need to live up to its visual requirement, while those that did not followed suit in the expectation of eventual recognition by looking the part.⁷ To a certain degree, this expectation was repaid by Vespasian, whose success in the civil war of 68/69 rested in part on the support of a Spanish legion raised by Galba. With a legislative action that we call the Flavian municipal law, Vespasian raised all Spanish communities without privileged status under Roman law to the rank of *municipium*, a grant which seems to have taken several decades to have been put into effect.

Nonetheless, with this Flavian municipal law of AD 73 or 74, Spain's various urban centres began a process of convergence that gradually eliminated the practical differences among them – all that had previously lacked them gained Latin rights and municipal charters, thus using Roman law within their own communities, while their magistrates gained the Roman citizenship upon completing their term of office.⁸ The overall effect was to ensure that the cooptation of Spanish elites into a larger Roman elite took place juridically and *in toto*, rather than through individual grants of Roman status or through the mimetic adoption of Roman customs without legal basis. In effect, the Flavian municipal

urbanism see Bendala 1994. Strabo 3.2.151 famously comments on the early Romanization of the inhabitants of the Guadalquivir valley.

⁵ On the origins of *conventus* see Burton 1975; Lintott 1993, 54–69; Galsterer 2000, 346–348 and Curchin 1990 for the social effects of the *conventus* organization. The fourteen *conventus* capitals were Tarragona, Cartagena, Zaragoza, Clunia, Astorga, Lugo, and Braga in Tarraconensis; Scallabis, Beja (Pax Iulia), and Mérida in Lusitania; and Córdoba, Astigi, Seville, and Cádiz in Baetica. The standard account of their boundaries is Albertini 1923, 83–104, but see now the divisions in the second edition of CIL II.

⁶ Cf. Navarro/Magallón 1999 on the role of cities in the Augustan plan for Spain.

⁷ Sherwin-White 1973, 225–236, for the way in which looking the part of Roman could help a city's chances of achieving the status. We can see the mimetic impulse at work in, e.g., the Augustan theatre at Italica, the circus at Lisbon, and the forum at Conimbriga.

⁸ For the Latin right, see Sherwin-White 1973, 108–116; Lintott 1993, 132–145; Mentxaka 1993. The main evidence for the grant is Pliny, NH 3.30, and of course the fragments of municipal laws from Spain which have produced a vast literature. The most complete copy is the *Lex Imitana*, for which the edition in González Fernández 1986 remains the most accessible. González Fernández 1990 presents texts for all fragments known at its date of publication. Mangas 2000, 83, offers a table showing extant fragments and the chapters of the law which they preserve, with full references to available editions.

laws created Hispano-Romans.⁹ By the second century AD, about 30 *coloniae* and more than 300 *municipia* dotted the Spanish landscape. The unit that defined political, administrative, and social geography was the autonomous urban centre and its dependent territory, not just theoretically, as in so much of the Roman west, but also in practice.¹⁰ Very few centres of population lacked autonomy or were administered from some other city. The vast *civitates* of the *Tres Galliae*, within which several 'towns' might fall under the administrative control of a capital city, simply did not exist in Spain, where the terms *civitas* and *municipium* were functionally interchangeable.¹¹ The Spanish municipalities knitted the peninsula together and controlled it on behalf of the imperial government in which they participated.¹² Most of these cities continued to exist in late antiquity, although they leave fewer traces in the historical record. Not just in the fourth century, but for centuries thereafter, they remained the essential units of control, both for the imperial government and its various would-be successors, and also for the local elites who clung to the Roman ideal of a political life based on the city until the Arab conquest.

Urbanization and Romanization were interchangeable phenomena, inasmuch as becoming Roman meant creating a Roman-style townscape. For that reason – whether they were superimposed on pre-existing towns or created *ex nihilo* in a new location chosen by Roman government – Spanish cities had become remarkably homogeneous by the middle of the second century AD, most equipped with the basic furnishings of a Roman city: an orthogonal street grid with a forum or fora at its centre, public baths, and, if the city was large enough, a theatre, amphitheatre, or circus. After the second century, very little new monumental construction is attested, with the exception of numerous urban wall circuits and the palace of Cercadilla at Córdoba. The general absence of new monumental construction after the later second century has traditionally been taken as a sign of decline, whether in financial capacity or in public spirit. Yet as recent studies of Spanish imports show, the cessation of monumental construction does not correspond to a decline in the peninsular economy, but rather to a steady growth in the Spanish capacity to import luxury goods from the early third century onwards.¹³

⁹ This is attested by the increasing participation of Spaniards in imperial politics from the late Flavian period onwards: Étienne 1966; Caballos 1990 for Spanish senators; Caballos 1999; Alföldy 2000, 453–456 for Spanish equestrians.

¹⁰ For comparison with Gaul see especially Drinkwater 1983.

¹¹ Lintott 1993, 129–145 for a comparative overview; most Spanish cities referred to themselves indiscriminately as *respublicae* by the second century: Alföldy 1977, 12–14; Ortiz 1999.

¹² To see how widely Roman urbanism was diffused, and how much more recent research has changed our understanding of it even in areas once considered relatively untouched by Roman culture, one may compare Alföldy 1987 with idem 1999.

¹³ Aquilué 1992; Pérez Centeno 1999, 75 with references. Exports also grew in some places: although the industrial export of olive oil from Baetica declined (Remesal 1997), the *garum* industry grew and spread to every coastal region of the peninsula: Nolla/Nieto 1982 and the many works cited at Gorges 1992, 104 n. 83; Puertas Tricas 1986/7; Rodríguez Oliva 1993; Fernández Ochoa 1994a/b.

On the other hand, the slackening of monumental construction does more or less coincide with the decline of the epigraphic habit in Spain.¹⁴ That point is key. It is likely that the phenomenon of monumental construction, like that of inscribing dedications and memorials on stone, was fundamentally linked to the process of becoming Roman; the habits were adopted when competition to become Roman in juridical and social terms was strong, and when advertising the acquisition of that status was of real significance. But elites had acquired that status across almost the whole peninsula long before the Antonine Constitution of AD 212. Once the status was shared by all, there ceased to be any social significance in advertising it.¹⁵ Even though the decline of the epigraphic habit is subject to much regional variation – at Cartagena, for instance, inscriptions virtually cease before the end of the first century – its broad patterns support this interpretation.¹⁶ The decline tends to come earliest in areas with the longest urban and Roman traditions, latest in cities of the Gallaecian northwest which were only heavily enfranchised and urbanized in the first half of the third century.¹⁷

In other words, the slackening of monumental construction, as well as the decline of the epigraphic habit, are not *a priori* signs of decline. Rather, they reflect the fulfillment of a very specific, functional end. For that reason, they were socially unnecessary once Spain had become juridically and socially romanized. If we take this approach, we are able to avoid our own anachronistic notion that the classical city, with its competitive and inscribing elites, must necessarily be better than all others. We can, in other words, treat the romanizing impetus of the first two centuries AD as just one phase of ancient Spanish urbanism. That done, the real question becomes the balance between maintenance, disuse and alteration to the second-century cityscape in later centuries, and the developments of institutional life that accompanied such changes. As to the latter, it is clear that the centre of urban life remained the *curiae* throughout Spanish late antiquity. The documentation for curial offices becomes less substantial with the decline of inscriptions, but Louis ROBERT long ago taught us not to confuse the loss of documentation with the disappearance of the institution documented.¹⁸ As it happens, the changes to urban government attested elsewhere in the empire – for instance the growth of a class of *principales* within the larger *curia* – are

¹⁴ Mrozek 1973 and MacMullen 1982 are the basic studies of the epigraphic habit.

¹⁵ This broad interpretation is suggested by the comments of Meyer 1990 on funerary epigraphy as an advertisement of the *iura privata* or Roman law, particularly the right to testation. In general, see Witschel 1999, 60–84.

¹⁶ For the epigraphy of Cartagena, see Abascal/Ramallo 1997.

¹⁷ See, for instance, the richness of the third-century epigraphic dossier at Aquae Flaviae: Rodríguez Colmenero 1997.

¹⁸ Robert 1960, 570–571 and *passim*. That he is correct is demonstrated by a good Spanish example: most of our evidence for *collegia* in Spain cluster in the epigraphically prolific second century, but we first meet the *collegium corporis fabrorum* of Córdoba in 247 (CIL II²/7, 188); then, fully a hundred years later, we meet the *collegium* again dedicating a *tabula patronatus* (CIL II 2211 = CIL II²/7, 332) which echoes exactly the language of such *tabulae* known from centuries past.

unknown in Spain, while ongoing curial government can be traced there as late as 465.¹⁹

The most important task facing these *curiales* must have been the maintenance and/or regulation of the existing cityscape – at Emporiae (Ampurias), for example, we have evidence for the coordinated and well-supervised sealing up of the abandoned Hellenistic *neapolis*, a task that must have meant curial oversight.²⁰ Everywhere, the fate of both private and monumental buildings lay substantially in the hands of *curiales*, for which reason the physical state of the cityscape has long been taken as diagnostic of urban and curial health. Such a connection is defensible, so long as we do not assume that change in usage, or even disuse, are signs of urban decline. Changes may actually represent the responsiveness of local elites to changing tastes among the population, and fashion certainly does seem to explain the differing patterns of use between different sorts of monument. Thus circuses and amphitheatres were maintained everywhere in the peninsula, sometimes until astonishingly late: at Zaragoza, the amphitheatre was repeatedly repaired, with new sand floors laid, until the sixth century or so.²¹ Theatres, on the other hand, were rarely very popular in Spain, and many had ceased to be used already in the second century.²² In some places, for instance at Saguntum, the theatre was modified to accept gladiatorial shows, turning it into a sort of amphitheatre.²³ Only in important conventual or provincial capitals like Mérida, where the theatre advertised the city's status as an imperial capital, did theatres survive. Similarly subject to shifting tastes were large public baths. In many cities, these were clearly in use right through the

¹⁹ Chance epigraphic references demonstrate the continuity of curial office through the third century – see the catalogue of magistrates in Curchin 1990. Perhaps more important is the testimony of the council of Elvira which, as Duchesne 1887 showed, was held c. 300–302. The canons show the bishops gathered there confronting a perfectly functioning – and to them deeply disturbing – urban government, with its *curiales*, *duumviri* and local priesthoods. Later in the fourth century, the council of Toledo had to prohibit churchmen from holding local office (I Toledo 8 = CCH 4.331–332), while Pope Innocent chastised Spanish bishops for arguing cases in civic courts (Inn., Ep. 3.7 = PL 20.485–493). The Luciferian *Liber Precum* shows the curial order being invoked as a court: Coll. Avell. 2.74. Curial fiscal responsibilities are attested by AE 1915, 75 = ILER 5836, which shows two curial magistrates taking charge of weights and measures. In 465, Hil., Ep. 16 (Thiel) = PL 58.17 refers to the *honorati et possessores* of seven *civitates* in Tarraconensis, and CTh 1.20.1 defines *honorati provinciarum* as *ex curia corpore*. For the letter and its contents, see Larrañaga 1989.

²⁰ From the very beginning, the responsibility of the *curia* for the upkeep of the city is laid out in municipal foundation charters: Lex Irn. 19; 62; 79; 82f.; for the later empire see the laws collected in CTh 15.1. For Ampurias, see Aquilué 1984; Marcet/Sanmartí 1989; Mar/Ruiz 1990 and 1993; Nolla 1992.

²¹ Beltrán Lloris 1993: new sand floors continued to be laid down until eventually the fifth row of the *ima cavea* was covered over. At Tarragona, the amphitheatre was redecorated with spoils from the disused theatre; it was repeatedly restored, under Elagabalus, and then again under Constantine: Vianney/Arbeola 1987; Beltrán/Beltrán 1991; Mar/Roca/Ruiz 1993; Alföldy 1997, 68–83; Pérez Centeno 1999, 23 with references; RIT 98/99 for the Constantinian reforms.

²² As at Tarragona: Mar/Roca/Ruiz 1993; Cádiz: González/Muñoz/Blanco 1993; and Cartagena: Ramallo/Ruiz 1998, 122. In general see Jiménez 1993.

²³ Hernández Hervás et al. 1993.

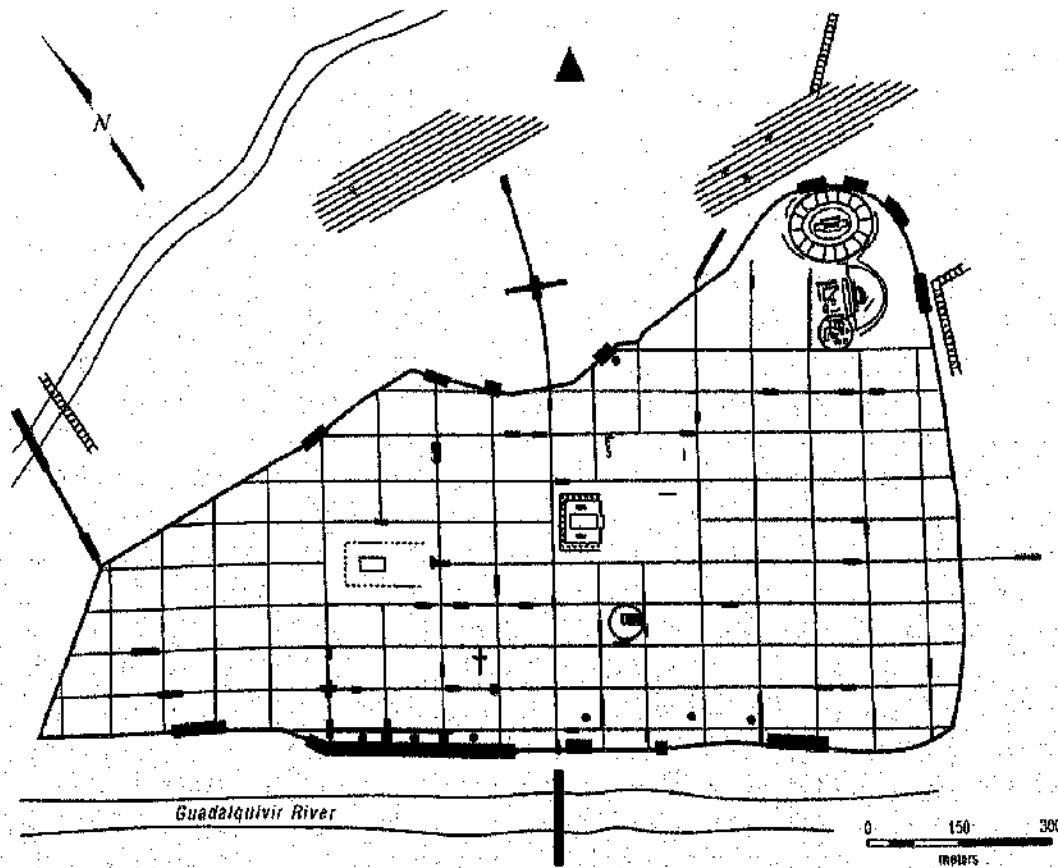


fig. 2: Plan of Mérida.

fourth century, but in others they had disappeared by the end of the third, as in Complutum (Alcalá de Henares) where the main baths of the city were integrated into the adjacent curial building around this time.²⁴ Again, we are not looking at universal decline, but rather at changes in taste which saw a shift from public bathing to more discreet private baths attached to individual residences.

Perhaps more important than the fate of individual monuments is the fact that early imperial street grids and fora continued to articulate urban space in the later empire, though not without alteration. The first major change to the basic shape of the second-century city involved the occupation of certain types of public space by private construction. This generally involved the extension of residences into the porticoes of public streets or the remodelling of townhouses to take over the surface area of smaller streets. Such changes altered early street plans, but they are generally contemporary with signs of economic growth, such as the upgrading of *domus* on richer plans, and the remodelling of temples in the fora.

²⁴ For catalogues of bath sites, see Mora 1981; Fernández Ochoa/Zarzalejos 2001. At Gijón, the baths remained in use through the fourth century: Fernández Ochoa/García/Uscatescu 1992. At Zaragoza, by contrast, public bathing seems to have disappeared: Aguarod/Mostalac 1998, 11. Similar phenomena can be observed at Toledo: Rojas/Villa 1996; and at Valencia: Blasco et al. 1994; Marín/Ribera 1999. For Complutum, see Rascón 1995 and 1999: the date is either very late third or, perhaps more probably, early fourth.

The best examples come from Córdoba and Mérida, generally two of the peninsula's better known cities. At Córdoba, the cooptation of formerly public space by *privati* started before the middle of the third century, while at Mérida it began somewhat later [see map 2].²⁵ The chronology of this phenomenon in different parts of the peninsula varies between the early third and the middle fourth century, but examples can be multiplied from every urban site in which modern stratigraphic digs have been conducted. Again, although such changes have tended to be seen in terms of decline, they can be understood just as plausibly in terms of changing social needs: by the end of the third century, it would appear that the representational value of the perfect Roman city performed a less important social function than did competition in private display and, perhaps, the pressures of a growing population.

This evidence from the third and the early fourth century is relatively uniform across Spain, but cities began to diverge more noticeably during the middle and later fourth centuries, undoubtedly in consequence of the Diocletianic reform of provincial administration.²⁶ In Spain, this meant the division of the three older provinces into five, and the addition of Mauretania Tingitana to the diocese.²⁷ The size of the imperial administration in the province was thereby greatly increased, while the creation of a Spanish diocese added a large new vicarial establishment to the diocesan capital at Mérida.²⁸ Probably in the same period, the infrastructure of the Spanish provinces was reorganized for the benefit of the *annona militaris*. This would explain the construction of many city walls in this period, as well as the reconstruction of several early imperial wall circuits and a generalized repair of roads attested by numerous *miliaria*. Walls are difficult to date typologically, and in Spain few have been dated by reliable stratigraphic excavation along their foundations. Nevertheless, the most recent attempt at a thorough catalogue of Spain's late antique walls dates just under twenty walls to the decades between 280 and 320.²⁹ These more or less Diocletianic walls, concentrated in but not confined to the North and Northwest, were once held to be evidence of insecurity and urban decline, but they make more sense as part of the infrastructure of the Spanish *annona*. We have few literary references to Spanish *annona* in the fourth century, but the concentration of walls and milestones, as well as the distribution of coin finds, suggests a major investment in the road and city network of the peninsula at the beginning of the fourth century.³⁰ If one also

²⁵ Cf. León 1993, for a summary of evidence from Córdoba.

²⁶ See in general Seston 1946; Barnes 1982; Williams 1985; with Carrié 1994 on the mints.

²⁷ There were precedents for this in the third century, with changes in the status of Baetica and the short-lived attempt of Caracalla to divide Tarraconensis in two provinces: Albertini 1923, 117–126; Alföldy 1995 and 2000, with Alföldy 1969, 49f. 106–108. Later, the Balearics were detached from Carthaginiensis and made into a province of their own.

²⁸ For the size of vicarial and praesidial staffs see Jones 1964, 373–377, 592–596.

²⁹ The single best discussion of the topic is Fernández Ochoa 1997, 249–259, which updates both the catalogue and analysis of Fernández Ochoa/Morillo 1991 and 1992.

³⁰ CTh 13.5.4; 13.5.8 are directed to a *comes Hispaniarum* and deal with *navicularii* in the service of the *annona*; Claud., In Eutr. 1.404–411 also implies state supplies coming from Spain. Reynolds (forthcoming) offers ceramic evidence.

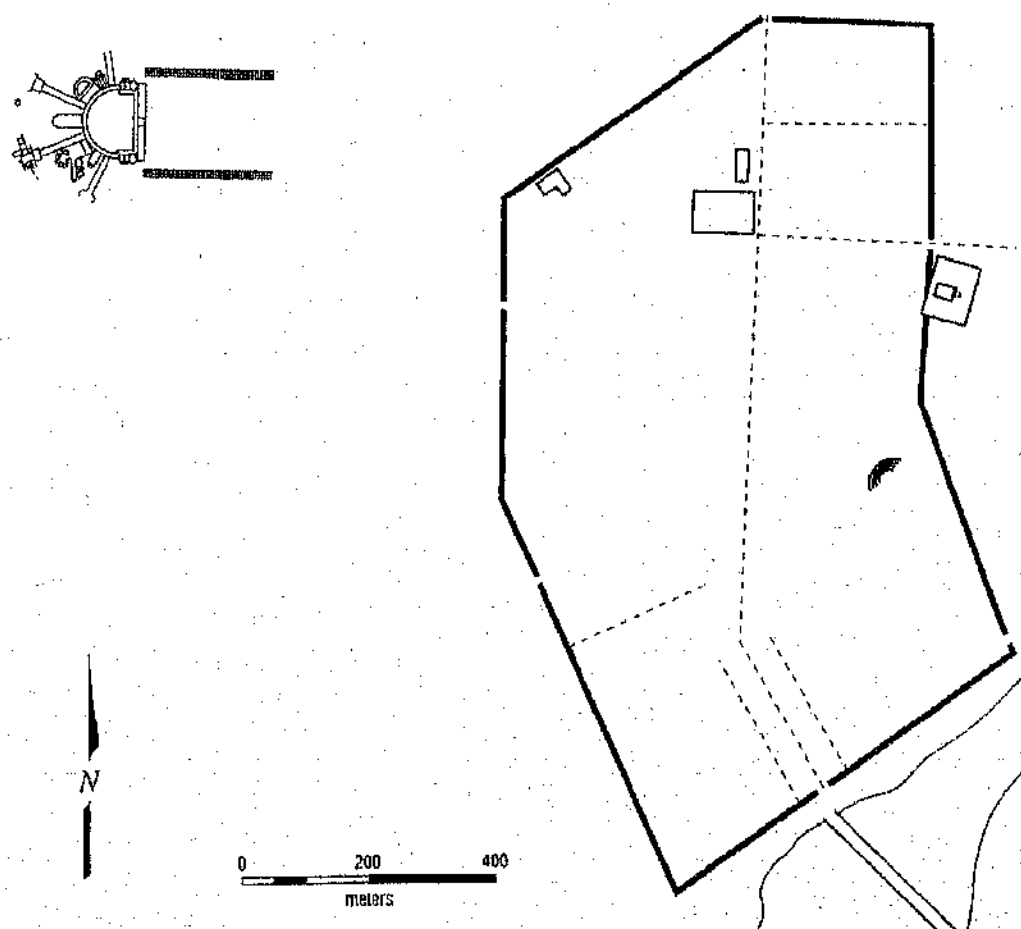


fig. 3: Plan of Córdoba.

takes into account the garrison units listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, there is a good case for a Spanish role in the imperial government's constant redistribution of goods.³¹

With the exception of Gijón, however, none of the walled cities of the Spanish north has been excavated well enough to document the influence of the new walls on the local cityscape, let alone the local economy. But the necessity of imperial finance in the construction of walls has been demonstrated for Britain and may also hold true for Spain.³² Indeed, throughout the fourth century it was the variable impact of imperial government that made the greatest difference to Spanish cities. In a few key cities, chiefly imperial capitals like Mérida and Córdoba, the fourth century brought massive public construction. Much the best-known manifestation of this trend is the palace of Cercadilla at Córdoba, discovered in the late 1980s under the nineteenth-century railyard and thoroughly documented before its destruction by the new high-speed AVE terminal. In antiquity, the palatial complex was extramural, lying parallel to the circus and

³¹ Not. Dig. occ. 42.25–32. See García y Bellido 1976, 80 with fig. 21 and Marot 1999, 150, for a distribution map.

³² Wachter 1998.

completely dominating the western approach to the city [see map 3].³³ The western end of the complex was completely closed and the only access came from the city. A long plaza, flanked by barracks, led the way into a courtyard articulated by a semicircular cryptoportico. Basilicas, baths, and private quarters ran symmetrically off this portico like the spokes of a wheel, while the whole complex was supplied with water by the diversion of one of the city's three aqueducts. Whether the palace was designed for the provincial governor or for the emperor Maximian, it was certainly the product of imperial initiative, and it had profound long-term effects on the shape of the old intramural zone of Córdoba.³⁴ Mérida, for its part, was in a state of constant renovation during the fourth century, the famous Constantinian inscriptions from the circus and theatre now matched by material evidence for the growth of deluxe townhouses and private euergetism in the monumental core of the city.³⁵

As those examples illustrate, cities that experienced regular imperial patronage flourished, but the gap between such cities and those with no permanent imperial establishment grew wider and wider. The basic shape of the second-century city remained intact everywhere, but in most cities the physical infrastructure deteriorated. This is true even of great cities like Zaragoza, where by the 370s all of the secondary sewers had silted up and, even in the main forum, the drainage conduits no longer carried waste water into the sewers and the Ebro [see map 4].³⁶ Parallel processes are visible throughout Spain's cities, and the chronology everywhere seems to be very late fourth-century. There are very few cities that defy this pattern, primarily trading centres like Barcelona or Alicante on the Mediterranean, or Gijón on the Bay of Biscay.³⁷ A few interior cities like Complutum also experienced substantial growth, though it is hard to gauge the reasons

³³ All the material evidence is in keeping with a late third- or early fourth-century date, but the one piece of epigraphic evidence seems to fix the construction between 293 and 305: Hidalgo/Ventura 1994; Hidalgo 1996, 141–147. The circus to the south of the palace was the second of Córdoba's circuses: the first, only just discovered, had been situated to the east of the city, but seems to have gone out of use in the second century for reasons unknown (see Murillo et al. 2001).

³⁴ Maximian appears as the Iberian *Ares* in a fragmentary papyrus: Page 1941, 544 no. 135, which has led Hidalgo 1996 to identify the palace as designed for him; see, however, the objections of Arce 1997. The long-term effect was to shift all the public activity away from the southern forum of the city and into the older colonial forum, nearer to Cercadilla: Carrillo et al. 1995, while the centres of population began to cluster near the river, possibly because of a diminution in the amount of available water with the diversion of an aqueduct to Cercadilla.

³⁵ The Constantinian evidence is published in Chastagnol 1976. For the brickstamps at the theatre, which suggest a late fourth-century date for the creation of a new *versura*, see Durán 1998 and 1999. For Mérida generally, see the series of *memorias* published under the title *Mérida: Excavaciones Arqueológicas*, which has appeared irregularly since 1997, each containing dozens of relevant contributions.

³⁶ Beltrán Lloris/Fatás 1998 is the best short introduction to the archaeology of Zaragoza, with references to relevant site reports. For the sewers, see Mostalac/Pérez 1989, 104–113, with more recent corroboration in Hernández/Núñez 1998.

³⁷ For a summary of the evidence, Kulikowski 2004, ch. 5.

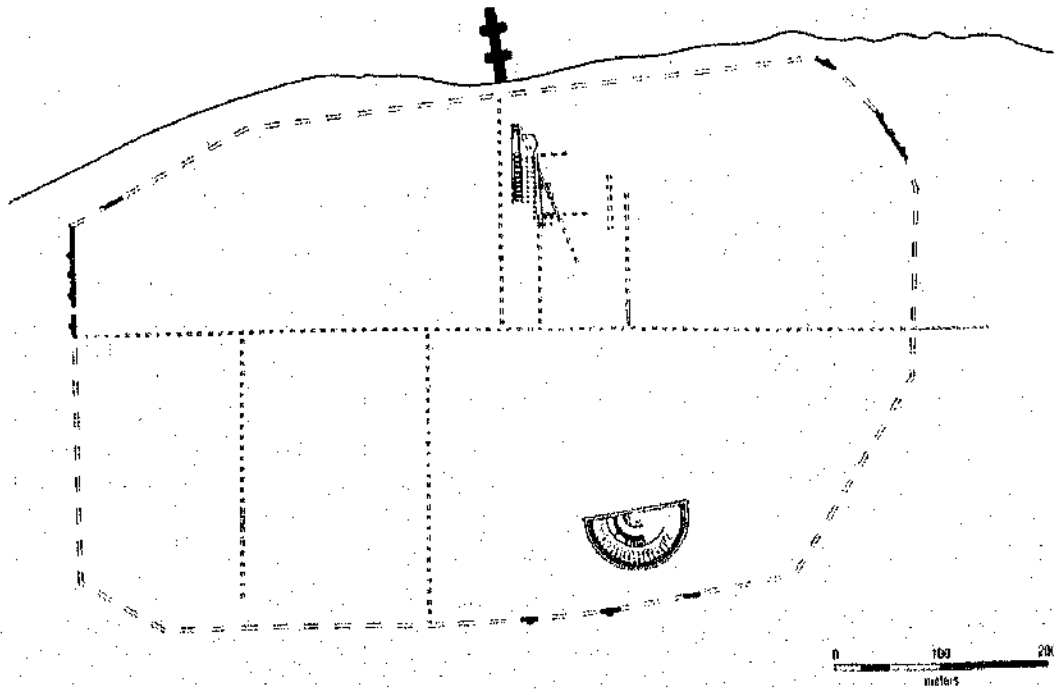


fig. 4: Plan of Zaragoza.

for their success.³⁸ On the whole, however, Zaragoza was more typical of Spanish cities as a whole: there were no functional changes to urban space, no reimagining of city plans, merely the physical decay of what existed and a failure to repair it.

In time, similar changes took place even in the most important and well-connected cities, but only in the fifth century, and more suddenly. The case of Tarragona is most striking: Roman Tarragona was built at the base of tall hill several hundred metres from the seaside. The city had been enclosed in a wall since Republican times, but since the Flavian era, the hill had been the site of a massive imperial precinct, dominating the old Republican *colonia* at its foot.³⁹ Built on three terraces, this complex included a temple of the imperial cult, a forum in which the council of the *provincia Tarraconensis* met, and a vast circus. This large complex was accessible only through the vaults of the circus, separated from the rest of the city by the Via Augusta which passed through town at this point [see map 5].⁴⁰ Within the city but separate from it, Tarragona's imperial complex was perhaps the most grandiose monument of the *pax Romana* in all of Spain. As such, it was in constant use and regularly maintained throughout the

³⁸ Rascón 1995 is the best overview.

³⁹ For the walls, Hauschild 1983; Hauschild 1993; with the historical sketch of Carreté/Keay/Millet 1995.

⁴⁰ For the forum, see generally TED'A 1989, 435–448. To this should be added the evidence of engineering from Aquilué 1993; the study of decoration in Pauliatti and Pensabene 1993; and the study of the forum portico in Güell et al. 1993. For the circus, see Dupré et al. 1988; Piñol 2000. On the provincial cult, cf. Alföldy 1973.

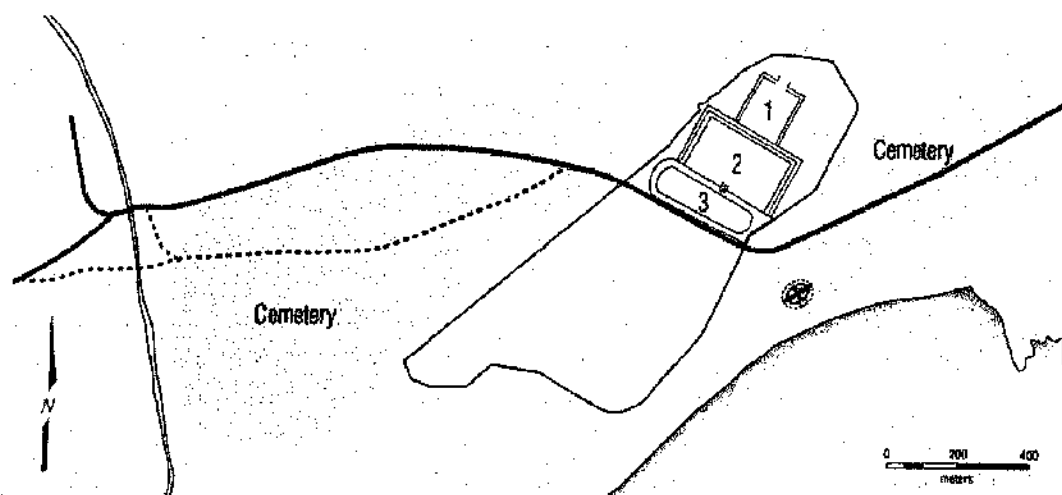


fig. 5: Plan of Tarragona and its *suburbium*.

fourth and well into the fifth century. In the 440s, however, the provincial forum lost its grandiose rectangular articulation: in at least one substantial section, its paving stones were torn up and carted off, replaced by a domestic rubbish pit.⁴¹ By contrast, another corner of the same forum was still being used for imperial honorific inscriptions down to 472, the year of our last extant imperial dedication in all Spain.⁴² The access towers which had led from within the *cavea* of the circus to the southern corners of the forum continued to be the main routes of passage between the upper and lower cities until the third quarter of the fifth century, but then one tower was turned into an ashpit which clogged the stairwell entirely.⁴³

The covering over, or filling up, of large public spaces – spaces with symbolic as well as functional purpose – implies the disintegration of the social function which had once made them necessary. Across Spain, however, no new model of urbanism replaced the old one until the very end of the fifth century, or more frequently the middle of the sixth. This is important, for we are used to approaching late antique urbanism in terms of the Christianization of the old Classical cityscape. In Spain, however, it has become clear that Christianity remained a largely extramural phenomenon until very late, and that the intramural zones of Spanish cities were physically Christianized only very slowly. The first Spanish churches were martyrial, hence located in the suburban cemeteries where martyrs were interred. Although we stop hearing very much about non-Christians in Spanish towns by the end of the fourth century, Christian cult and episcopal power remained suburban and extramural. Only when the old public spaces – the temples and fora – had lost all their social content did the physical manifestations of Christian authority come to occupy central intramural spaces. Thus at Tarragona, an episcopal church and palace were built at the apex of the city, on the site

⁴¹ TED'A 1989.

⁴² Sánchez Real 1969; López 1993. The inscription is CIL II 4109 = RIT 100, to Anthemius.

⁴³ Carreté/Dupré 1994.

of the old imperial cult precinct, the walls of which were knocked down to put up the *episcopium*. The symbolic significance of this construction cannot be missed, and was presumably quite deliberate, but it is striking how late it took place – fully half a century after there had ceased to be imperial government in Spain.⁴⁴

This same chronology is found everywhere: however central Christianity became to the life of Spanish townspeople, it remained on the outskirts of the city proper. In a similar way, despite what one often reads, there is almost no evidence for intramural burial before the Arab conquest.⁴⁵ In only one city, Valencia, do we find definite signs of intramural burial as early as the fifth century.⁴⁶ Indeed, even at tiny settlements like Saldania, the prohibition of intramural burial is constant.⁴⁷ All this suggests that the rapid replacement of Classical urbanism by a new Christian form in the decades after Constantine is much exaggerated. Indeed, the chronology suggested by the material evidence helps to place our overwhelmingly Christian literary sources in a new light. In the year 420, for instance, we have very clear evidence for a council of bishops subordinating themselves to the authority of a *comes Hispaniarum* at Tarragona.⁴⁸ As late as the 450s, the old nexus of *curiales* and landowners, and their dominance over ecclesiastical affairs, is demonstrated by an extant letter of Pope Hilarus.⁴⁹ As the fifth century progressed, however, many of the old roles of urban benefactors were taken over by bishops. Thus a famous inscription from Mérida records the repair in 483 of the city walls and the bridge across the Guadiana by bishop Zeno, together with Salla, a Gothic count in the service of Euric.⁵⁰ By contrast, the first basilica of Santa Eulalia may well have been sponsored by a *vir illustris* whose mausoleum held a singular place of honour in the nave of the church.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the interaction of Zeno and Salla raises the important question of the barbarians and what impact they had on the Spanish urbanism of the fifth century.

Mérida, as so often, is the most informative site. Unlike Spain's other Roman capital cities, Mérida became a sleepy provincial town during the Middle Ages, and remains one to this day. In consequence, its ancient remains are well preserved, and they have been excavated with exemplary care since the late 1980s. Two neighbourhoods in particular have offered extensive and well-documented

⁴⁴ Aquilué 1993, 97–107.

⁴⁵ The old but much cited García Moreno 1977/8 insists on a generalized move to intramural burial across Spain. The intramural cemeteries that one finds most frequently cited are either not in fact intramural, as at Mérida and Segobriga, or based upon old excavations of which no extensive record was published and no verifiable trace remains, as in Barcelona, Roda, Iluro, Clunia, and Veleia.

⁴⁶ Escrivà/Soriano 1989. Cf. Ribera/Soriano 1996, 199, for the evidence of ceramic dates. Albiach et al. 2000 refines the chronology.

⁴⁷ Saldania is modern La Morterona about forty miles north of Palencia. For the burials, see Pérez/Abasolo 1987; Pérez 1990.

⁴⁸ Aug., Ep. 11*, on which see Kulikowski 2002; other examples in the fourth-century career of Potamius of Lisbon: Montes Moreira 1969.

⁴⁹ In 465, Hil., Ep. 16 (Thiel) = PL 58.17.

⁵⁰ Vives 1938 = ICERV 363 = CICM 10.

⁵¹ See Mateos 1999, 159–160.

results, the zone of the Morería and the area around and beneath the church of Saint Eulalia.⁵² The Morería excavations preserve several blocks of the Roman city, two in their entirety. The church of Saint Eulalia preserves a suburban villa property, over which a large necropolis developed, several mausolea and numerous burials predating the erection of the earliest basilica. Both sites experienced very substantial destruction in the fifth century. At Santa Eulalia, mausolea were razed to ground level, simpler gravestones demolished, and the entire zone levelled. In the Morería, many of the *domus* were badly damaged; two bodies lay crushed beneath the roof tiles of one; in another, a body had been buried according to normal rites which, given the Roman horror of intramural burial, suggests a period of siege in which it was impossible for people inside the walls to reach the age-old cemeteries outside them. At neither site can the destruction be precisely dated, but it certainly belongs within the middle four decades of the fifth century, a period during which Mérida stood at the centre of Spain's most disputed region.⁵³ It was the diocesan capital, hence a prize worth winning, and our only continuous literary source for the period, Hydatius, demonstrates how often Mérida was the target of Suevic, Gothic and imperial campaigns. We cannot correlate the material destruction discovered at Mérida with any specific episode mentioned in Hydatius.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the archaeology of Mérida illustrates quite graphically the physical results of the sort of violence recorded with little detail in Hydatius' chronicle and in the tantalizing scraps left by later chroniclers.

Mérida, unfortunately, is the only site in Spain at which the material and literary evidence shed light on each other so informatively, a distinction it retains in the sixth century, when the city's suburban archaeology confirms in every particular the details of the *Vitas Patrum Emeritensium*.⁵⁵ For the most part, however, the archaeology of the sixth century is virtually silent, a discipline still in its infancy. Too little is known about the material culture of sixth-century cities for us to make even the very broad generalizations about trends that are possible for the third, fourth and fifth centuries. We cannot, for instance, have any overall sense of how or when the last vestiges of the Roman cityscape disappeared. In places like Tarragona, Astorga and León, it is still visible in the modern plan of the city, but elsewhere, at Seville for instance, it seems that much of the old street plan had already disappeared before its total transformation in the Islamic period.

⁵² There is a general overview of the Morería digs in Alba 1997, but the site as a whole awaits full publication. For the examples cited, cf. Alba 1998 and 1999. For Santa Eulalia, see Mateos 1999 and the preliminary reports cited therein.

⁵³ Though we cannot be certain that the evidence of destruction at the Morería is contemporary with that at Santa Eulalia.

⁵⁴ Pace Mateos 1999, the chronology of the materials excavated must almost certainly be later than the raid of Heremigarius which Hyd. 80 [90] places in the year 429. Given that our historical record of the fifth-century peninsula is so lacunose, there is really no good reason for correlating the material evidence at Mérida with one of the raids that happens to be documented, rather than one of the many others that must have taken place without leaving a trace in the written evidence.

⁵⁵ As shown in detail by Mateos 1995; 1999.

Despite the uncertainties of Spain's sixth-century archaeology, the literary evidence shows signs of substantial continuity. It is fascinating to find the vocabulary of high imperial urbanism – with its senators and *curiales* – being used in a description of late sixth-century Cantabria, though they can hardly have described the same offices as they once did.⁵⁶ At Córdoba, by contrast, a persuasive case has been made for the continuity of the curial order, if not curial office, into the ninth-century Caliphate.⁵⁷

These points do not, of course, demonstrate the survival of the ancient city – that had more or less disappeared by the beginning of the sixth century. But they suggest that urban populations and urban centres remained at the heart of peninsular life in the post-Roman period. This point is borne out by the focus of all sixth- and seventh-century campaigning on the old Roman cities and along the old Roman roads, which were clearly still necessary in order to govern the peninsula successfully. What those sixth- and seventh-century cities looked like, what it felt like to live in them, is at present completely beyond our power to reconstruct. But until very recently, the same thing might have been said about the Spanish cities of the later empire, our understanding of which has been completely transformed by recent discoveries.

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(not included in F. Bérard et al., *Guide de l'épigraphiste. Bibliographie choisie des épigraphies antiques et médiévales*, Paris 2000³, 17f.)

CCH	G. Martínez Díez (ed.), <i>La colección canónica Hispana</i> . I–V to date. Madrid 1963ff.
CICM	J.L. Ramírez Sádaba/P. Mateos Cruz, <i>Catálogo de las inscripciones cristianas de Mérida</i> , Mérida 2000.
ICERV	J. Vives, <i>Inscripciones cristianas de la España romana y visigoda</i> , Barcelona 1969 ² .
ILER	J. Vives, <i>Inscripciones latinas de la España romana I–II</i> , Barcelona, 1971/2.

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⁵⁶ For Braulio of Zaragoza's *Vita Aemiliani* see Castellanos 1998; 1999.

⁵⁷ García Moreno 1995.

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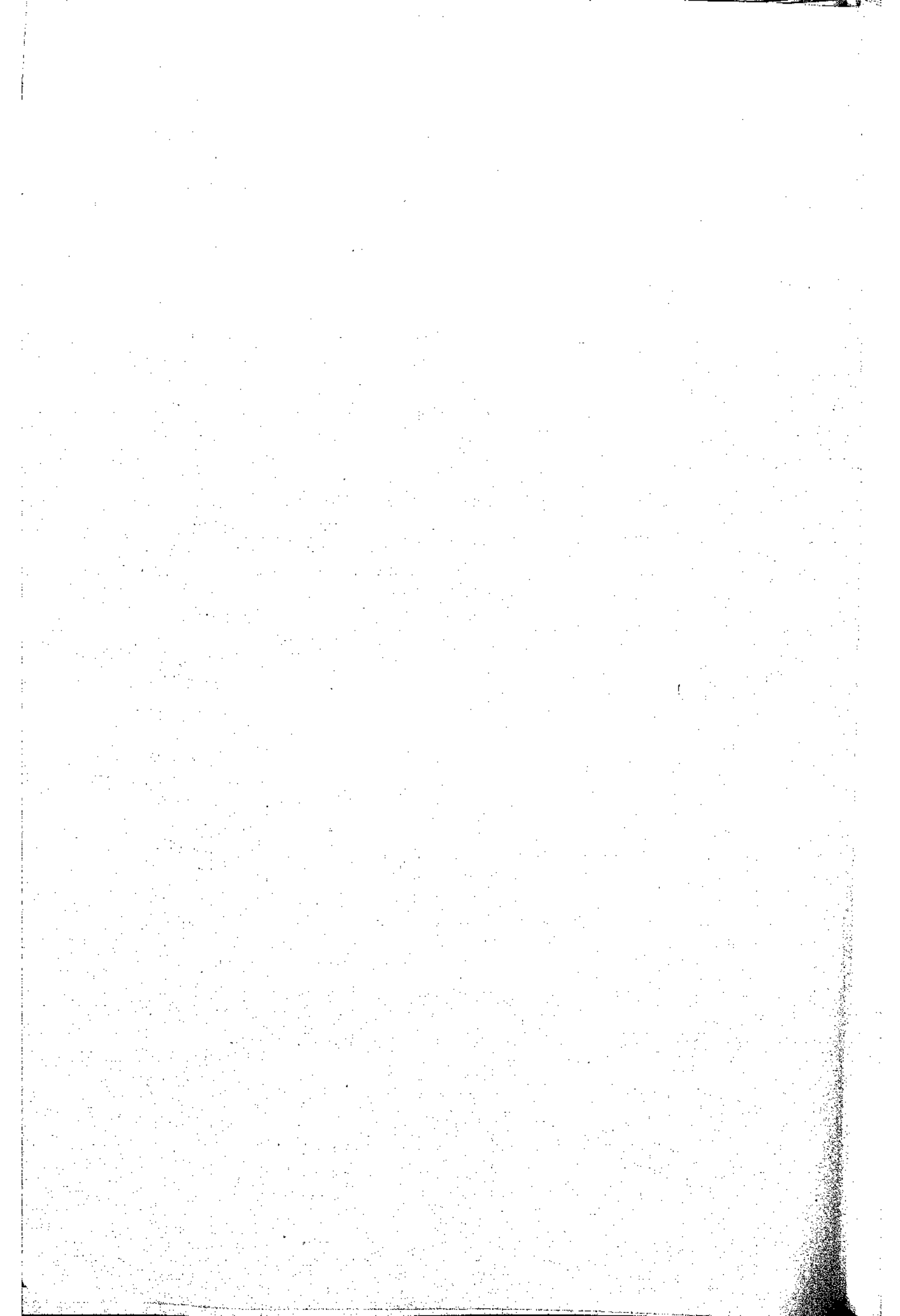
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The Changing World of the Cities of Later Roman Egypt

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This contribution centers on the world of the cities of Roman Egypt in the period from Diocletian to Justinian. The theme of the colloquium, change or decline, (incorrectly) suggests that decline is not a form of change or (perhaps correctly) that change is always positive.¹ There are in fact plenty of opportunities to register changes for the worse and for the better, in both the economy and the society of later Roman Egypt, but I leave an overall assessment of the balance between the two to those interested in that sort of thing.

When we are looking at change or decline, the comparison is with the immediately preceding period. The simple fact of changes is indisputable: little remains the same over time. The real question is the extent of the changes: how much did this, that or the other change? That is where it usually hurts. To answer such a question for just one aspect of the ancient economy or society one needs quantifiable data, and for most of ancient history there are none. In an earlier contribution (van Minnen 2000a), I have argued that to measure changes in the economy we need papyri.² Most of what I will discuss here is based on a first attempt to gather some quantifiable data from papyri. Given the fact that only about 5% of all papyri have so far been published, future generations will have ample opportunity to correct the claims I make in this contribution when the other 95% become available.

In what follows, I will not attempt to confront my findings with impressions from other parts of the Empire for which there is no usable evidence. I will also pay little attention to the archaeological evidence from the cities of Roman Egypt themselves. Alexandria will also get short shrift, because relatively few papyri are available for it. In this contribution the world of the cities is the provincial world of the Nile Valley, with cities such as Oxyrhynchus, Antinoopolis and Hermopolis occupying center stage. We are best informed about such cities and their involvement in the surrounding countryside, for which they acted as the point of contact with the wider world.

Later Roman Egypt is not a completely unknown field of inquiry, but the harvesters have been relatively few. For some reason, the older the papyri, the more attention they have received in the past. The only comprehensive work is an introduction to papyrology with a focus on Late Antiquity (Bataille 1955). For the fourth century, there are some useful works of reference, such as a survey of upper level administrative personnel (Lallemand 1964). For 'the long fourth

¹ So the 'inventor' of Late Antiquity: Riegl 1927, 18.

² One can quantify all kinds of things from papyri, such as the rate at which personal names in Egypt were Christianized over time (Bagnall 1982).

century', we have a recent monograph (Bagnall 1993) with the somewhat misleading title *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, although it covers 'only' the period from Diocletian to Theodosius II. It does, however, treat all the evidence.³ For the next phase of later Roman Egypt, the age of Justinian, we are much less well off. Apart from an older work (Rouillard 1928), there are sketches in the new *Cambridge Ancient History* (Keenan 2000) and in the book on the cities in Late Antiquity that inspired the colloquium (Liebeschuetz 2001, esp. 169–202).

A Survey of the Material

Given the fact that the present volume is not merely intended for specialists, papyrologists or papyrological historians who focus on Egypt in Late Antiquity, I will start with an overview of 'what's out there'. What kinds of papyri do we have for the period from the late third through the sixth century? Where are they from? How did we get the ones we have and not others? Can we tell why they were written? Such questions will help non-papyrologists and historians of Late Antiquity who do not focus on Egypt appreciate generalizations based on papyri. I will pay special attention to changes in the documentation. Some institutions that used to generate a lot of paperwork went out of business in the course of Roman imperial history, others were innovations of Late Antiquity. There are also perplexing differences in what we have from the various cities. Some cities, such as Hermopolis, yield more papyri in Late Antiquity than before, something that we would perhaps have expected in any case. Others, such as Oxyrhynchus, seem to yield fewer papyri than before.⁴ Some cities yield far more official papers, others abound in family archives. These differences make it difficult to generalize about cities in later Roman Egypt.

The volume of published documentary texts from Egypt can be traced most conveniently with the help of the *Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis*.⁵ This does not include papyri in Coptic and Arabic, which skews the data for the later period quite a bit, and excludes inscriptions, but this makes little difference. The *Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis* registers all texts by date. The majority is now fairly exactly dated, but many papyri can only be dated on palaeographical grounds to a century or more. The dating formulas used in late ancient texts are such that they often do not permit a more exact dating. Indiction cycles were renewed every 15 years, so that it helps little if we only have an indiction number. By grouping the material in longer periods, we can get a sense of the uneven distribution. This does not necessarily reflect changes in the intensity with which people in Egypt documented what they were doing in Late Antiquity, but probably no more than good or bad luck. Most papyri were found about a century ago, and almost all

³ For Graeco-Roman Egypt, I know of only one other such book, Préaux 1939 on Ptolemaic Egypt.

⁴ This might actually change as more attention is paid to the largely untapped finds from Late Antiquity among the holdings of the Egypt Exploration Society.

⁵ <http://www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/~gv0/gvz.html>

publications of late ancient papyri draw on the same finds. More publications from the existing pool will not alter the statistics. Only significant new finds in other places than the ones ransacked a century ago may change the picture. The only thing continuing publication of the remaining 95% unpublished papyri will do is to redress the balance between earlier periods in Egyptian history, which have received more attention from papyrologists, and the later Roman period generally. But it will not change the uneven distribution within that later period. RÉMONDON (1966) set down to tabulate the spread of documents from Late Antiquity (without the help of the *Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis*) and BAGNALL/WORP (1982, 1980 and 1979) did the same (again without the help of the *Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis*) with the same result. The only important conclusion from all this work is that we are ill informed about the fifth century, and that the transition from 'the long fourth century' to the age of Justinian is a particularly elusive problem in the history of Later Roman Egypt. The little evidence we have from the fifth century does not suggest that anything was badly wrong with, or different about, the economy of Egypt at the time. The few archives from that period do not document the nature and extent of the changes in the economy and the society that did take place in that period.

Here follow some very rough calculations for numbers of more or less exactly dated texts per century. The total number of entries for the period from Alexander to Mohammed in the *Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis* is 52,000 'dates'. If a papyrus contains two different dates, there are two entries. I have not tried to correct for this.

	exact	not exact	total	remarks
third century	4,800	3,000	7,800	undated : dated = 2 : 3
fourth century	2,300	3,200	5,500	undated : dated = 3 : 2
fifth century	400	1,150	1,550	undated : dated = 3 : 1
sixth century	1,100	3,000	4,100	add Coptic
seventh century	500	1,400	1,900	add more Coptic
eighth century	300	350	650	add more Coptic and Arabic
total for Late Antiquity	9,400	12,100	21,500	add Coptic and Arabic

No one has ever read all these texts. From the ratios between dated and undated papyri, it appears that, as time progresses, papyri are more difficult to date. From the sixth century onwards, we have to add the substantial body of published Coptic (and later Arabic) papyri, which are not included in the *Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis*.⁶

What these figures do not tell us is that the character of the evidence changes over time. The provenance of the papyri and the context, public or private, from which they derive also have to be taken into account. Most papyri were once part of larger archives, kept by public administrative offices or by private persons or

⁶ There is no convenient way to tabulate the Coptic and Arabic evidence. For some quick data, see van Minnen forthcoming.

families, usually members of the elite. In some cases one suspects that major finds of clustered materials were actually found in or near the building or property where the 'owner' (an office or a family) was originally located,⁷ but most papyri were found in the accumulated rubbish in abandoned parts of a town, such as in Oxyrhynchus. Even rubbish is not impervious to careful sifting by modern archaeologists, but their methods were not used when the papyri were found a century ago. Any connection between papyri, if not recoverable from the content of the texts, is either lost or only known accidentally or anecdotally, when excavators or dealers claimed that such and such papyri were "found together".

The most important fact non-papyrologists need to know is that most papyri from Late Antiquity derive from cities and almost none from villages. For the earlier periods, the Ptolemaic and early Roman, the situation is not quite the opposite, but there is a preponderance of material from certain villages in the Fayyum (the Arsinoite nome) in the Ptolemaic period, and these villages hold on to their ground (also literally) until about the fourth century, when papyri from these villages peter out.⁸ This skews the data and the histories written from them enormously, and makes it difficult to compare the earlier periods with Late Antiquity. Still, the earlier Roman evidence from cities such as Oxyrhynchus and Hermopolis is quite good, and for certain aspects, such as taxation, broad comparisons over time can be made.

In what follows, I have classified the more substantial archives from the third through the sixth century according to type. I have made three broad distinctions: private, public and state archives. Private archives are by far the most numerous. They can cover anything from private correspondence to ownership documents for the family property. Public archives are those kept by the cities themselves. They deal with the administrative affairs of the city, its income and expenditure. State archives are mostly concerned with taxation and sometimes contain comprehensive documents for landownership. They may also deal with the upper level administrative, judiciary and military hierarchy. I will be very brief here as details can be traced with the help of the Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections Worldwide.⁹

For the **third century** the most important *private* archive is:

- *Heroninus* from Theadelphia, also relevant for the capital of the Arsinoite nome: accounts and correspondence; important for the exploitation of the estates of the Alexandrian aristocrat Appianus; studied in depth by RATHBONE (1991)

For the third century the most important *public* archives are:

- *Boule* (council) of *Hermopolis*, with its less substantial counterpart:
- *Boule* of *Oxyrhynchus*
- *Corn Dole* of *Oxyrhynchus*

⁷ The family archive of Taurinus from Hermopolis would be a case in point. See the introductions to BGU XII and XVII.

⁸ This was not the same for all villages. See, e.g., van Minnen 1995.

⁹ <http://lhpc.arts.kuleuven.ac.be>

The most startling fact about these archives is not that we do not have anything like it from elsewhere, but that we have these from Egypt at all. Councils were not introduced in Egyptian metropoleis (capitals of individual nomes) until 201. Even Alexandria did not have a council until then. The exceptions, the Greek cities Ptolemais and Antinoopolis, which was founded in 130, are much less well documented for this relatively early period. The point about the councils is important also because the active participation of councils in running the cities is often used as a yardstick to measure the vitality of cities in Late Antiquity. This would not work in Egypt before 201. The Roman government promoted the development of Egyptian cities on the imperial model long before 201. The introduction of councils was thus just one step in a longer process. Still, only in Late Antiquity did Egyptian cities become virtually indistinguishable from cities elsewhere in the Roman world – or the other cities became increasingly like the Egyptian ones.

State archives from the third century are less important for my purpose.

For the **fourth century**, the following *private* archives are particularly noteworthy:

- *Apollonius paralempetes* (receiver) from Pesla in the Hermopolite nome, also relevant for the capital of the nome; it deals with the exploitation of an estate of a wealthy family from Hermopolis
- *Theophanes* from Hermopolis, also detailing official business he was conducting for the city and the state
- *Aurelia Charite and her son Asclepiades* from Hermopolis, concerning the exploitation of their estates and official business undertaken for the city
- *Leonides* from Oxyrhynchus, detailing the private business of urban craftsmen, as does the following:
- *Papnoutis and Dorotheus* from Oxyrhynchus

The only important *public* archive from the fourth century is the following:

- *Logistai* (curatores) of Oxyrhynchus

This archive is especially important, because the contrast with the third century, when the council was in control, could not be greater. In the fourth century, the *logistes* seems to have taken over as the central authority in the city as far as the public side of things was concerned.

An important *state* archive from the fourth century is:

- the *Landlisten* (P.Herm.Landl.), a consolidated register of land owned by urban residents from Hermopolis and Antinoopolis; a checklist for part of the 'tax mass' in the Hermopolite nome; additionally interesting because we have two versions, which are very similar, but also document changes that occurred in the years that elapsed between the two, also allowing a comparison between two cities (see Bowman 1985, to which all subsequent work is indebted)

For the **fifth century** the following archives may be classified as *private*:

- *Taurinus (and Sarapodorus)* from Hermopolis, detailing the exploitation of a private estate on much the same lines as earlier archives – or later ones, for that matter

- *Church of Anastasia* in Hermopolis
- *Catholic church* of Oxyrhynchus

These two archives illustrate the difficulties in coming to grips with changes in Late Antiquity. Are they private archives, or do they belong to the category of public archives? They do not deal with the running of the city, but many scholars regard the church hierarchy a replacement for traditional urban administrators. Some traditional social roles of urban administrators were indeed taken over by members of the church hierarchy, but this is not the same thing: churches were private institutions throughout Late Antiquity. When they move more and more into the center (also literally), this is better interpreted as an example of the 'privatization' of power in Late Antiquity.

Similarly problematic are the following *private* archives from the **sixth century**:

- *Dioscorus* from Aphrodite, spills over into another type, that of *state* archive; apart from private papers with the usual concerns for family and property (on some of these see van Minnen 2003), Dioscorus kept (and produced) other people's papers; he also inherited the position of *protokometes* (one of the three village executives) from his father, and this entailed keeping track of taxation. Dioscorus also spent time as a notary in Antinoopolis, the provincial capital, which therefore also gets some coverage through the archive. Aphrodite was a village by this time, but a very big one; earlier it had been a city of its own, independent of Antaeopolis¹⁰
- *Phoibammon son of Triadelphus* from Aphrodite, a brother-in-law of Dioscorus; more strictly concerned with private affairs
- *Apiones* from Oxyrhynchus, detailing the exploitation of the estates of an exceptionally wealthy family in the Oxyrhynchite nome (who owned land in other nomes as well), which traced itself back to the (dark) fifth century and produced one of the last consuls of Constantinople. The early publication of texts from this archive skewed our view of Later Roman Egypt, because no one in Egypt was even remotely comparable in wealth to the Apiones; more recent studies (e.g. Mazza 2001) are trying to correct this picture. The documents published so far number 'only' 252

For the **seventh century**, I can mention one important *state* archive:

- the *Codex fiscal* (P.Sorb. II), like the *Landlisten* a comprehensive list, this time of tax payments made for land in the Hermopolite nome; important because some data from the *Landlisten* appear here unchanged over the centuries

There are numerous smaller private archives for the entire period. Most deal with the exploitation of estates owned by members of the elite. None of these estates, including the ones listed above, seem to have been as aggressively exploited as the Appianus estate in the third century. This is important because that estate has been widely interpreted as an 'early adopter' foreshadowing what we find in Late Antiquity. None of the private archives is primarily concerned

¹⁰ Some texts in the archive relate to the village's claim to independence from this city in fiscal matters.

with the role of the large estates in the state administration, which is a topic I cannot address in this contribution. Even the Apiones archive is more concerned with the private estates. The Apiones seem to exploit them along very traditional lines.

In addition to archives of smaller and bigger landowners, later Roman Egypt has also produced archives of urban craftsmen. Craftsmen are far more representative of the urban population as a whole, but usually muted in the evidence from other parts of the Empire. The contribution of urban craftsmen to the Egyptian economy may even have been on the rise in Late Antiquity. The late ancient documentation on Egyptian craftsmen has been treated in a Russian monograph, which has had a limited impact (Fikhman 1965). Wage labor in general, either in agriculture or in urban crafts, is a most attractive subject, because it is understudied for antiquity and often ignored. There are clear parallels here with Medieval Europe for which we have so much more evidence. We know – in relative terms – a lot about urban craftsmen in later Roman Egypt, because notarial documents (contracts between individuals) now constitute a sizeable part of the evidence, far more so than in the earlier Roman period and far more so than estate archives or state papers. Leases of various kinds of urban property, labor contracts, sales and loans proliferate and give later Roman Egypt the feel of Medieval Europe, where notarial archives are a major source of documents. The flourishing of notaries, such as Dioscorus, in later Roman Egypt, accredited by the state, but operating privately, provides us with the kind of evidence that allows the same kind of analysis as the notarial archives of, say, Medieval Italian cities, even if we are dealing with tiny numbers of texts by comparison. Letters and receipts may be the most frequent types of texts, but notarial documents are often more telling, as they tend to deal with matters that are far more complex.

Public archives are rare. Their distribution over time is also significant. For the third and the earlier fourth century we have nicely contrasting archives, the council archives for the third and the *logistai* archive for the fourth century, but for the later period, we have no more than some individual texts or references in estate archives about expenditures incurred in running the cities. We can document more easily what the cities were doing for the state than what they were doing for themselves, although many run-of-the-mill things the cities did for themselves in the third and fourth centuries certainly continued in later centuries.

The most important state archives are consolidated registers of which we have several from Hermopolis. The *Landlisten* and the *Codex fiscal* are new types of registers necessitated by the revolution in the way the Roman Empire was administered under Diocletian and Constantine (on which see Carrié/Rouselle 1999). The Dioscorus archive also contains consolidated lists. Various other accounts give us snapshots, which are often obscured by the accounting procedures involved.

Receipts for state taxes continue to be important. For certain cities, such as Hermopolis, which almost lacked such receipts earlier, these now become an important part of the evidence. One type of tax receipt, however, disappears completely: the poll tax receipt, which does not return until the Arab

period.¹¹ Related to the demise of the poll tax is the disappearance of papers documenting the status of free individuals. The privileged Greek population of Egyptian cities had outlived itself once the poll tax, which they paid at a lower rate, was discontinued because of the inflation occurring after AD 275.¹² The fiscally privileged status of the Greeks had become irrelevant. The gymnasium as the point of entry into the privileged Greek population is also no longer in evidence in the fourth century. The gymnasium now becomes merely another word for bath, and sports and the like disappear from the evidence even earlier in Egypt than elsewhere.

The poll tax had been a state affair, whereas the privileged status of the Greek population of Egyptian cities had been a public affair conducted by the cities themselves under the supervision of the state. In the first century of their rule, the Romans imposed a stricter definition of who belonged to the privileged class of urban Greeks in Egypt (see van Minnen 2002a). Until the last quarter of the third century, this group was still significant, as we can tell from the corn dole archive from Oxyrhynchus. There the number of adult male recipients is set at 4,000, of whom the vast majority were urban Greeks, implying over 10,000 privileged Greeks on a total urban population of at least twice as much. The disappearance of the poll tax and of the privileged status of urban residents is an important social change in Egyptian cities during Late Antiquity. So is the introduction of the corn dole in Oxyrhynchus. Apparently, the population needed a 'food supplement', but only the privileged Greeks received one.¹³ The corn dole was a short-lived social change in Oxyrhynchus, because it is attested only for a couple of years in the third quarter of the third century.

Histories of individual cities based on these archives and other texts have rarely been written. Alexandria has yielded no papyri itself. Most papyri pertaining to Alexandria are letters sent from Alexandria or copies of Alexandrian documents for use in the country. There is a monograph on Alexandria in Late Antiquity (Haas 1997), but it does not deal adequately with any of the topics that interest us here. Only Oxyrhynchus has been covered in any detail (Fikhman 1976), again in a Russian monograph: *Rossica non leguntur*. Panopolis has also received some attention in recent times (Egberts/Muhs/van der Vliet 2002), but this material still needs to be put together meaningfully. Heracleopolis, Antinoopolis, Hermopolis, Coptus and smaller towns like Aphrodite and Djeme (the Coptic name of a town on the west bank of the Nile at Thebes)¹⁴ deserve closer attention, but so far this has not been a priority for papyrologists or papyrological

¹¹ The *diagraphon* receipts from before the Arab conquest are not for a poll tax.

¹² There was only a brief attempt at revival in cities under Diocletian.

¹³ Carrié/Rouselle 1999, 707 interpret the corn dole in Oxyrhynchus as an example of the 'autoccelebration' Egyptian cities supposedly engaged in in the third century. But the other example they give from the third quarter of the third century turns out to be directly linked to an urban crisis, this time in Hermopolis (van Minnen 2002b). In my view, the corn dole in Oxyrhynchus also addressed an urban crisis.

¹⁴ Cf. Wilfong 2002, whose treatment of the town itself is as brief as that of Aphrodite in the spate of recent monographs about Dioscorus of Aphrodite.

historians (Alston 2002 is disappointing). Given the differences between the documentation for these cities, individual monographs for the better documented ones are perfectly feasible. The question whether the differences in documentation also reflect real differences in the way these cities operated economically and socially is more difficult to answer. I do not believe in 'papyrological habits', and the fact that the various cities started to look increasingly like one another in Late Antiquity leads me to suspect that differences in documentation reflect real differences between cities. The Apiones archive from Oxyrhynchus, for example, reveals a nome dominated by big landowners. But what is going on in the Oxyrhynchite nome cannot be extrapolated to other nomes without further ado.

If we take a closer look at the various cities, striking differences and similarities, also compared with the earlier period, emerge. I will limit myself here to three cities, Arsinoe, Hermopolis and Oxyrhynchus. *Arsinoe* is known for the earlier period mainly through archives found in villages on the fringe of the Arsinoite nome – villages that died out in about the fourth century, which helped some papyri survive. In Late Antiquity *Arsinoe* is known mainly through documents from the city itself. Private archives have produced numerous leases of land and other property as well as other types of contracts.

It is the same thing in *Hermopolis* except that there are no archives from villages in the Hermopolite nome. Private archives from Late Antiquity contain massive numbers of leases of land and other property as well as other types of contracts. State papers include consolidated lists such as the *Landlisten* and the *Codex fiscal*, which we do not have for *Arsinoe*. Earlier, *Hermopolis* also yielded a significant number of archives, both private and public. There is a great continuity in the documentation for the exploitation of land by urban landowners.

This latter aspect is the sore point in the documentation for *Oxyrhynchus*. For the earlier Roman period, we are well stocked with private archives full of leases of land and other property as well as other types of contracts. For Late Antiquity we have just 19 leases of land, only 4 in the Apiones archive. This is a complete break with the earlier period. It seems on balance more likely that areas where the documentation remains roughly the same experienced fewer changes than areas where the documentation is marked by significant changes such as in *Oxyrhynchus*.

In conclusion I would like to draw attention once more to an often overlooked aspect of the papyrological documentation: its almost indefinite expandability. The study of cities in later Roman Egypt ultimately rests on detailed work on individual papyri. Now, the vast majority of papyri (95%) are still unpublished, and the vast majority of unpublished papyri are from Late Antiquity. Moreover, the vast majority of unpublished papyri from Late Antiquity come from cities. There is a challenge here that is rarely experienced by students of other areas of the ancient world, where the material is already well known or increases by just as much as can be taken in each year. Papyrological material grows at a faster rate than, say, epigraphical material, but there has been little effort to do something about the backlog.

The Economic Backdrop

In the remainder of this contribution, I will attempt to plot the major changes in the overall social and economic conditions within which the cities had to operate. This will allow a clearer grasp of the impact (growth, decline, or both) such changes may have had on the cities themselves.

We first have to have some idea of the size of the population of Egyptian cities in the later Roman period. I already indicated what I think Oxyrhynchus was like in the third quarter of the third century based on the corn dole archive (about 10,000 urban Greeks and at least 10,000 further urban people). Fikhman has tried to calculate the size of the population of Oxyrhynchus in Late Antiquity, using an average figure of craftsmen per guild.¹⁵ This will not quite do, but the net result, about 20,000, is probably the right order of magnitude. In the earlier Roman period, the city seems to have been more populous. The size of the site suggests a maximum population of about 35,000, which the city had reached by the second century. A decline from the earlier Roman period to the third century can be explained with reference to the long-term effects of the Antonine Plague, which coincided with increasing demands on the population. More taxes were raised in the third century, because the state budget increased rather than decreased, and more men were recruited into the army to fill the depleted ranks. The army even increased in size, even if not by much, which meant a significant overall increase in the percentage of able-bodied men serving in the army. Instead of being part of the productive (and often also reproductive) flow, they would spend their time in idleness, trying to ward off the barbarians, who were more eager than ever to enter the weakened Empire. After 275, the even more disastrous effects of the inflation depressed the population even further, and this continued well into the fourth century before there could be any talk of recovery. From the later fourth century to the sixth there are signs of recovery without, however, a return to earlier Roman levels, at least not in Egypt.

Scholars usually ignore the effects of the Antonine Plague, but if the disease was small pox and if small pox had not been endemic to the population before Marcus Aurelius, the effect would have been devastating at first, and the impact would also have been considerable in the long run. New-born babies would have been the primary targets of the plague after a while, because the rest of the population would have developed resistance. Demographic recovery would have been more difficult.¹⁶ Pre-transitional populations were very vulnerable and reacted to natural and man-made disasters with astonishing rapidity. After the Antonine Plague, the population of Roman Egypt must have contracted more than is commonly allowed. It all depends on the man-made pressures put on the population whether it recovered (rapidly) or not. The state only made things worse in the century after Marcus Aurelius. This certainly applies to the man-made inflation after 275, which raged for several decades. A pre-transitional population will react to man-made disasters in the same way as it does to natural

¹⁵ There are almost 100 guilds attested in the later period; see Fikhman 1971.

¹⁶ Small pox is worse than bubonic plague, which does not become endemic.

disasters: by rapid contraction. Recovery requires first and foremost a prolonged period of tranquillity. The fact that the plague became endemic in the third century, coupled with the inflation after 275 and the heavier burden put on the population by the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine did not bode well for a rapid recovery. The recovery, visible from the fourth to the sixth century, was slow precisely because of the constraints put on the population in the early fourth century. The government took at least relatively (if not absolutely) more able-bodied men away for the army, it taxed relatively (and even absolutely) more heavily, and it mishandled the integration of barbarians, which could have made up for the demographic losses. All this contributed to making the recovery a much slower process than it could have been.

I have tried to show in earlier articles how extensive the damage of the Antonine Plague especially in the Arsinoite nome was (in addition to van Minnen 1995 see van Minnen 1989 and 2001a). Whole villages and large tracts of land started to disappear in the third century. It is easiest to assume that this is ultimately related to natural and man-made disasters such as the plague and the inflation rather than to more cosmetic changes introduced in the running of Egyptian cities in the third and fourth century, which are better interpreted as attempts to cope with the long-term effects of the disasters.¹⁷ Such disasters are

¹⁷ In a response to Scheidel 2002, Bagnall 2002 has recently proposed the municipalization of Egypt after 201 as one main cause of changes in the economy during the third century. It is, however, difficult to see how institutions that co-existed with prosperity in other parts of the Empire for centuries before 201 should have contributed to the decline in Egypt in the third century. The municipalization of the third century was limited to the introduction of councils in Egyptian cities, and the process itself had started more than two centuries earlier. Finally, the third century did not see the emergence of a landowning aristocracy in Egypt (there had been one all the time). Bagnall also opposes my interpretation of P.Oxy. LXVI 4527 of 185 (van Minnen 2001a) as 'prose composition'. In the process, he makes two mistakes. He does not account for what is on the papyrus (an entry for the taxes in kind collected in the Arsinoite nome *until the end of the Egyptian year* – the last month of the Egyptian year is in the genitive, and Bagnall offers no alternative explanation for this) and misjudges the nature of Roman policies. The entry for the taxes collected until the end of the year falls woefully short of the target figures mentioned earlier (Bagnall does not adequately explain why there are two sets of figures). Bagnall thinks that, even if the actual figures were extremely low for this particular year, the fact that the Roman government still used the higher figures as target figures twenty years after the first occurrence of the plague proves that things had gotten back to normal, otherwise the Roman government would have adapted the figures to the post-plague situation (if things really had become much worse structurally). He argues that the Roman government was otherwise quick to respond and cites the reversal of a tax policy (the policy of collective responsibility for the payment of taxes) as a case in point. This policy was indeed abolished a couple of years before the Antonine Plague, but it had been a problem since its introduction in the early Roman period. From this example alone, it would appear that the Roman government was extremely slow in responding to problems – it took them two centuries! I find it far more likely that the target figures, which had been established in the two centuries before the plague, were kept on the books until these books themselves were replaced during the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine. Of course, I cannot decide whether 185 was just a bad year or whether there were structural problems in the Arsinoite nome related to the Antonine Plague. This also applies to another case from a village in the Arsinoite nome several decades later (van Minnen 1989), which also involves actual figures that fall woefully short of target figures.

known to have had devastating effects on pre-transitional societies, and in recent years, several scholars (Sallares 1991; Horden/Purcell 2000) have pointed especially to the rôle of the environment and to the effects of natural disasters on what was by any standard an extremely fragile world. Suffice it here to say that the plague and the inflation would not have had the devastating effect they had, if the ancient Mediterranean World had not reached its peak in the second century. It had arrived there thanks to the relatively peaceful first two centuries of the Roman Empire and the natural propensity of pre-transitional populations and economies to grow under optimal circumstances.

When we have considerably less evidence it is tempting to ignore demography altogether, but that will not do. A population suddenly reduced can only recover when the strains put on it are also reduced. The additional strains put on the population of Egypt in the third and fourth century only made the situation worse, not better. If there had been no significant long-term effects of the Antonine Plague and the inflation after 275, why did things go badly wrong with the Empire? Why did barbarians cross the border, if defences were kept up at the same strength? Why did Diocletian and Constantine set out to change the way the state financed itself thoroughly, if the previous one and a half century had witnessed merely a series of cosmetic changes?

There is an even greater tendency among scholars to ignore the effects of the man-made inflation after 275, as if people and the state quickly learned to cope with the devastating effects of the erosion of incomes and taxes in money, and as if the introduction of a new currency based on gold made little difference. The last point has now received its due in an important monograph (Banaji 2001). The former point has not yet found adequate treatment. Urban governments and the state itself depended so much on incomes in money that the erosion of the currency dealt a heavy blow to the very fabric of society. The state grappled with it for decades until it found a new balance in the new gold currency. The cities never quite recovered.

My view of the economy of Egypt in the later Roman period allows disasters such as the plague and the inflation to have their full impact and is briefly as follows. The initial problems under Marcus Aurelius had not been solved in the following century, and the plague had become endemic. From 275 onwards things got worse because of inflation, which lasted well into the fourth century. In Egypt, the very slow recovery from Constantine to Justinian was not on the same scale as sometimes suggested for other parts of the Empire (e.g. by Patlagean 1977). None of the cities in Egypt we know anything about ever recovered to its earlier Roman size. Some parts of Egypt went out of business. State land especially seems to have gone out of commission by about a half. Formerly, state land had constituted a third of all land in Egypt. In the fourth century, former state land had dropped to a fifth of the total amount of land, at a time when the total amount of land itself had been reduced. In the first two centuries of Roman rule, there were 7.5 million arouras of land (a conservative estimate). A third of it was therefore 2.5 million arouras. In the later period, when the total amount of land had been reduced, one fifth was not 1.5 million arouras, but considerably less, say

1.25 million arouras. The difference with the earlier figure of 2.5 million arouras, 1.25 million arouras, is the amount of state land that went out of commission between the first two centuries and the later period. The easiest explanation for such a drop is that the number of people available for the exploitation of land in general had gone down significantly from Marcus Aurelius onwards and that the higher rents (later: tax rates) on state land made it less desirable to prospective lessors (later: buyers) than other land. Significantly, the losses in the Arsinoite nome in the third and fourth century were for substantial amounts of state land.

A bonus question would be to consider who actually acquired the remaining 1.25 million arouras of state land that was successfully devolved by the state onto private owners between the Early Empire and the fourth century. From the *Landlisten* we can tell that by the fourth century only about 12.5–15% had gone to urban landowners and about 85–87.5% to villagers. This is significantly different from land overall, which was split 30% for urban residents and 70% for villagers according to the same *Landlisten*. Because state land was generally less desirable land, those most likely to take it on, either as lessees or as buyers, would indeed have been villagers. The amount of land owned by the urban elite seems to have stood at about half that owned by urban residents in general, thus at 15% of the total overall. There is no evidence that this ever increased from the fourth to the sixth century or even from the first two centuries of Roman rule to the fourth century, as is often assumed.

Although we have to keep an eye on demography when we are doing ancient history, there are other, no less complicated, problems facing the student of Late Antiquity. One of them is taxation. It is fashionable nowadays to ignore taxes altogether, although they are one of the most crucial, while tangible, instruments of Empire. The more in taxes (as a percentage of the total product) the state arrogates, the more powerful it is, not only towards outsiders, whom it can more easily ward off thanks to armies paid with these taxes, but also towards insiders, especially the elite, whose power increases and decreases with the size of their income. The less taxes the state arrogates, the more likely it becomes that the little that is available is actually spent on the elite rather than for the common good, either through salaries for the state employees drawn more from the elite than from other groups, or through other earmarked expenditures at the source, closer to where the taxes were levied. It is often believed that the state was much less powerful in Late Antiquity than before and that it lost part of its power to the elite. It is also believed that taxes rose considerably in Late Antiquity. Unfortunately, these two propositions are incompatible. Which is correct?

Did the state really levy more taxes in the fourth century than it did in Early Roman Egypt? If so, did it then go on to increase the tax burden even further in the following centuries? If taxes were higher in the fourth century than before, the fourth-century state would have been more powerful. If sixth-century taxes were higher than in the fourth century, the state of Late Antiquity would have consolidated its power over time. This is in fact what happened.

Traditional wisdom indeed has it that taxes increased between Early Roman Egypt and the fourth century and that the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine

are to blame for this. Scholars from JONES (1964) to BAGNALL (1985a), to mention only a few, usually back up their claims with impressive figures that demonstrate the absolute increase in taxes, e.g. per unit of land. Recently DUNCAN-JONES (1994) has challenged the consensus by claiming that taxes on land actually declined. Who is right?

I think traditional wisdom is right in its assessment of the overall increase in taxes on land. It was even worse, because the tax rate as a percentage of the actual yield increased even more.¹⁸ Yields were so much lower in the fourth century than before that, even if taxes had remained at the same level as before, they would have put a greater burden on landowners. This is what CARRIÉ (1997) has called the "social arithmetic" of Late Antiquity. The alternative calculations of DUNCAN-JONES turn out to be seriously flawed,¹⁹ so that I can formulate the tax situation in Late Antiquity in the following terms: taxes on land in Egypt increased in Late Antiquity and kept on increasing. The government thus controlled a bigger share of the Empire's product with which it could do good things, such as defending the Empire against barbarians. It also did a good thing by getting more and more taxes from landowners, i.e. especially from the elite.²⁰ The tax burden as a whole shifted increasingly to the rich in Late Antiquity.

The upshot of this is that the state was increasingly powerful in Late Antiquity and that it consolidated its power against the elite over time, even if some state officials were in fact recruited from among the elite. This was possible because there was no feudalism in Late Antiquity. The state did not devolve power to local grandees, as is often assumed. The state was still sovereign everywhere. In this respect, the Empire of Late Antiquity was much more like the earlier Empire than the feudal constructs of Medieval Europe.

A quick survey of taxes in the Roman Empire will show that taxation was much more equitable in Late Antiquity than before. In the Early Empire, the 'super-elite' (the emperor and his closest associates) paid no taxes, nor did any landowner in Italy. No one in Italy paid poll taxes. In the provinces, some privileged categories of the population (admittedly not all elite) paid no poll taxes or paid it at a lower rate. The whole system clearly put the burden of taxation on the ordinary inhabitants of the Empire. In the fourth century, all these privileges were abolished. Poll taxes were not revived and eventually even urban crafts-

¹⁸ Gunderson 1976 claimed that an increase in taxes presupposes an increase in productivity, but there is no reason why the government in Late Antiquity could not have claimed a higher share of the total (now decreased) product by sticking to its guns. It also lowered some taxes not on land. So the increase in taxes affected primarily land.

¹⁹ Duncan-Jones 1994, 57-59, ignores additional money taxes on land, which gradually took the lion's share of the taxes. The basic rate, the tax in kind, did not change very much. Duncan-Jones also mixes up public and private land to end up with a larger average figure for the tax in kind in the earlier Roman period, but if we look only at private land, the rate creeps up over time. The land tax increases overall in absolute terms, let alone in relative terms when actual productivity is taken into account. That is what allowed the taxpayer to pay the tax. Duncan-Jones also ignores the fact that the craftsmen's taxes are monthly rates when calculating the overall tax in Egypt, but this and other mistakes need not detain us here.

²⁰ Plenty of landowners were not members of the elite, but I am trying to make a point here.

men's taxes were abolished towards the end of the fifth century. The bulk of the tax burden came to rest on the land.²¹ Taxing landed property rather than persons is a sure sign that the state of Late Antiquity was cracking down on the wealthy and leaving the less fortunate off the hook. It had of course every reason to do so. First, a bit of common sense: tax the taxable. That results in a fairer system than one that exempts the rich. Second, the 'implosion' of the currency after 275 that made it essential to move away from a system where about as much was collected in poll taxes as in taxes on land, because poll taxes were collected exclusively in money, which had lost its value. It is clear that the state had increasing difficulty in raising enough taxes for its budget already in the century following the Antonine Plague. The last quarter of the third century made it imperative to shift the tax burden onto something that could not run away (or die), in other words land. For as long as the inflation raged this made a lot of sense. The state continued to increase taxes on land between the fourth and the sixth century, although things did improve after the new gold currency had introduced a measure of stability already in the course of the fourth century. Clearly, in shifting the tax burden from people to land and from the poor to the rich the state had found a winner – it eventually even abolished what was left of taxes on persons. The reason why the state in the earlier Empire had allowed the wealthiest landowners to get away with paying little or no taxes was self-interest (the emperor and his closest associates were also the biggest landowners, especially in Italy). The earlier Empire also did not face the same kind of bills as the late ancient state, which had to ward off barbarians, now weighing in on an Empire that had lost many of its people and much of its income. In Late Antiquity, the state simply had to move in to secure a bigger share of the Empire's income for itself. It did so by levying more and more taxes on land.

The late ancient state put more tax pressure on the landowning elite, but tax pressure by itself cannot be used to explain the end of antiquity. If anything, the more aggressive tax regime of Late Antiquity helped the state find the money it needed to extend the life of the Empire by defending it against barbarians. Moreover, between the fourth and the sixth century the state further increased taxes on land, although things were gradually improving in that period. Tax pressure on the landowning elite can, however, still be invoked as part of the explanation for the end of the ancient city *per se*, along the lines suggested by LIEBESCHUETZ (2001). Urban life in the Roman Empire was associated with the aristocratic regimes that filled the ranks of magistrates and councils in the cities. Once the state started to crack down on the elite, they would come under increasing pressure to keep their own income (reduced because of increased taxes and declined yields) from being spent on the city. Less building, less repair and less public expenditure of any kind in late ancient cities can be directly linked to the more aggressive tax regime of Late Antiquity.

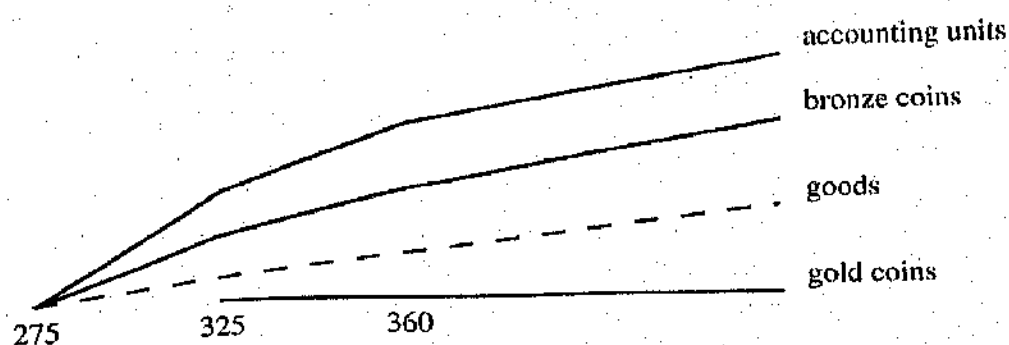
In the development of the Egyptian economy the most important watershed is 275, the year the inflation started. The extent of this crisis is usually misunderstood or ignored, because the traditional, now widely abandoned, interpretation

²¹ There were still some indirect taxes, but these are much more difficult to aggregate.

of the inflation made it start much earlier and for the wrong reasons (see Rathbone 1996). The inflation started in 275 when Aurelian advertised his return to a silver standard on his coins, which seems to have triggered widespread distrust in the currency as a whole. The bottom simply fell out of the currency (and the economy). Some contemporaries (and many modern scholars) linked the economic problems of the third century in the wake of the Antonine Plague with the reduction in the silver content of the coins struck by successive emperors. As we now know, this does not have anything to do with it. Unless the total volume of coins in circulation, or more precisely the currency available for economic transactions, increases, lowering the silver content of new coins is entirely harmless. Unfortunately, the moral indignation over the 'debasement' of the currency by successive third-century emperors led Aurelian to his spectacularly ill-advised advertising of one of the secrets of government (namely that one can reduce the amount of silver in coins with impunity). Throughout the third century prices rose only very modestly notwithstanding the ongoing debasements. It is only after 275 that prices start to double or triple in spasms for several decades. BAGNALL (1985b) links these spasms directly to retariffing by successive emperors, but I think that cannot be the whole story. The evidence is not precise enough to establish cause (retariffing) and effect (price increase) in any instance. Prices tend to increase in an inflationary regime, which then leads governments to react by retariffing the existing currency, thereby aggravating the problem. The rate of inflation after 275 is so high that we simply cannot distinguish the actual process in slow motion (with enough evidence in series) to definitely settle the issue.

We also have to do the math on the inflation. If prices in Egypt expressed in a particular bronze coin rose 48 times in the period from 274 to 295 and 1,000 times between 295 and 352, the first and not the last period is the period of the greatest inflation (contra Carrié/Rouselle 1999, 568). *The annual rate of inflation* in the first period is much higher. The rate in the second period is still high enough, but already lower than before. The inflation continued well into the sixth century, but it did not affect the new gold currency introduced by Constantine. Here another misunderstanding needs to be cleared up (with the help of Banaji 2001). Because Diocletian had already introduced a new gold coin, some scholars think that Constantine made no difference. Unlike Diocletian, however, Constantine set out to replace the existing currency based on bronze with one based on gold. Although he did not stop inflation altogether (and even helped it along by retariffing), it did slow down during his reign. After Julian, the inflation was in fact negligible. By then, there must have been enough gold coins in circulation to provide a solid basis to economic transactions of any kind. The gold-based currency of Constantine provided the standard for much of the world's currencies until the eighteenth century – a truly millennial achievement. Diocletian contributed virtually nothing to the fight against inflation and the widespread distrust of the currency. On the contrary, his price edict was a monumental proof of his incompetence in this area. This was lost on Julian and the infamous Anonymus *de rebus bellicis*, who blamed Constantine for causing the inflation, whereas Constantine actually put the mechanism in place that eventually solved it.

Here follows a simplified graph with (a) Egyptian prices for goods in the old accounting units and in the bronze coins in circulation, (b) the goods themselves (a certain amount of them²²) and (c) the prices for goods in the new gold coins (introduced in Egypt only in 325); the graph is valid until "the age of Justinian"; for what happened during "the age of Justinian" itself, see now Zuckerman 2004).



There is a tariff relation between the accounting units and the bronze coins in circulation (the top two lines). Between these on the one hand and the goods themselves and the new gold currency on the other hand (the bottom two lines) the relationship fluctuates according to the laws of supply and demand. The goods themselves also fluctuate as against the new gold currency. In fact, they become cheaper over time relative to gold (one gets more goods for a *solidus*). This is based on series of prices for silver bullion and wheat (in *artabas* per *solidus*), as follows:

	early IV	first half of IV	late IV	early V	VI
<u>silver</u>	12 : 1 ratio		14.4 : 1 ratio	18 : 1 ratio	
<u>wheat</u>		6-8 <i>artabas</i>			10-12 <i>artabas</i>

Real prices dropped over time. People got more for their *solidus* in the sixth century than in the fourth, and even within the century following Constantine people already got far more for their *solidus* than in 325. The *solidus* therefore had the effect not only of stabilizing the currency, but also of lowering prices over time. The later antiquity got, the cheaper life became for everyone. The stabilizing of the currency coincided with an overall improvement of the economy. Things got a little bit better from the fourth to the sixth century, from Constantine to Justinian, as more goods were produced. We know this, independently from prices, from the amounts of rent charged on private land, which reached their nadir in the fourth century, but increased by 20-25% from the fourth to the sixth century (see the next section).

²² I have dashed this line, since it uses another scale than the accounting units and the coins.

Trends in the Economy of Egypt in Late Antiquity

The period from the second century until 275 was relatively uniform. Yet, within the same period there is an unmistakable decline, which also affected Egyptian cities. The initial cause of this can be exactly located in time. There was a price jump of 100% in the period from 160 to 190 (Rathbone 1997). The Antonine Plague is the most obvious candidate to blame for this. If a substantial percentage of the population of Egypt perished, some items would have been temporarily cheaper,²³ but with the decrease in production (to match the decrease in the population) and without a decrease in the amount of money available for economic transactions, prices for ordinary products such as wheat would have gone up. The government did not reduce its expenditure on the army. On the contrary, it raised soldiers' pay. By pumping more money back into an economy that produced less, the government pushed up prices even more. Taxes remained roughly the same, but it proved difficult to squeeze the same amount in kind as before out of those owning land, which was now less intensively used than before. It was impossible to get the same value in money from those paying taxes in money on land and from people paying the poll tax, because the rates were not raised. Any money the government received was now worth half of what it used to be worth.

After the Antonine Plague, most prices were bound to rise, which we know they did by 100% between 160 and 190. Prices had been stable from the earlier first century (when the last retariffing had taken place) until Marcus Aurelius, notwithstanding debasement of the currency throughout this period (as I have said before, this has nothing to do with prices). Another indication of trouble in Egypt is the fact that villages in the Fayyum start to disappear in this period. Some villages held out until the fourth century or even into the fifth, but the point here is that villages that prospered until the third century disappeared forever. In the wake of the Antonine Plague, the population of the Arsinoite nome contracted and concentrated in the more manageable areas closer to where the Bahr Yusuf enters the Fayyum. The usual argument is that this only happened in the Fayyum. However, elsewhere the population suffered in the same way, with the same result: reduction and subsequent concentration of the population. Other areas could be brought back under cultivation more easily than in the Fayyum (because of the peculiar water regime in that area), but recovery of land elsewhere would have had to come from an increase in the population, which was in any case slow in coming as we have seen.

A major indication of trouble in the third and especially the fourth century is the slump in agricultural yields. We know this from land leases that specify exact amounts of produce as rents. On average, the rents are lower in the third century than before and again much lower in the fourth century than in the third. In an agrarian economy such as Egypt's this may safely be taken as an index of a drop in overall productivity. Because landowners and the state tried to keep as much land under cultivation as possible, the reduced rural population of the third and the even smaller rural population of the fourth century produced (much) less per

²³ Or even for a longer period, such as houses.

surface unit than before, which led to lower rents. There may be a slight improvement in the position of the tenant as well. With the drop in the population, labor became a more expensive commodity, but I do not think this affects the use of rent as an overall index of productivity. The rent hovers at (a little over) 50% of the yield. Sharecropping *per se* (for a share, usually half, rather than for a fixed amount of produce or money as rent) was unknown in Egypt for ordinary arable land until the fourth century. Most of the evidence for pure sharecropping for that kind of land comes from this century, the period of greatest economic stress in Egypt among landowners and tenants alike.

One point needs to be addressed here, because it is bound to be controversial. If I am right in assuming that agriculture extensified after the Antonine Plague, because everybody had an interest in keeping as much land under cultivation as possible and because there were fewer agriculturalists, where does the third-century estate of Appianus in the Fayyum, precisely the area that lost several villages starting in the third century, fit in? The estate focused on raising a cash crop, wine (Rathbone 1991). Viticulture is a rather more intensive form of agriculture. If Appianus developed all this *ex nihilo* in the third century, it would seem that the case for extensification is weakened, if not downright wrong. However, the vineyards of Appianus were developed much earlier than when he got hold of them. Evidence for these vineyards and for a remarkably widespread ownership of them (not just one big, absentee owner, but over a hundred smaller, local owners) is available for the second century before the Antonine Plague (see van Minnen 2000a). What seems to have happened here is that the resident agriculturalists extensified and hoisted their vineyards onto Appianus, who must have regarded them as a windfall. It was not all bad in the third century, and after a generation or two after the Antonine Plague things may have started to pick up again. It is, however, not irrelevant that the vineyards along with the villages where they were located disappeared altogether towards the end of the third century. Apparently, the Appianus estate, the model for much of our current thinking about estates in Late Antiquity, was not able to survive the inflation after 275. This confirms the bleaker picture I have been trying to paint for the decades following 275. Moreover, in contrast to the second century, when the vineyards raised substantial incomes for hundreds of locals, in the third century they raised an income for Appianus alone, and he spent it elsewhere, in Alexandria. The Appianus estate also seems particularly unsuitable as a model for a third-century take-over of land by aristocrats as a prelude to Late Antiquity. This makes too much out of what was no more than an interlude (Appianus buying up otherwise abandoned land) and ignores the watershed of 275: the cards were thoroughly reshuffled between Diocletian and Constantine.

This brings me to the second period in the history of the Egyptian economy in Late Antiquity. The 'long fourth century', from 275 until the fifth century, when our evidence is much reduced from previous levels, witnessed several more things on the downside. First, more villages in the Fayyum petered out. The inflation raged for at least the period from 275 to 325. It was not quite over by then, but the next century witnessed a significant drop in the rate of inflation, to

negligible levels in fact. In the decades immediately following 275, the Egyptian agrarian economy took another hit. The levels of production implied by the amount of rents charged to tenants in the fourth century is much down from what it was in the period from Marcus Aurelius to 275. Share-cropping agreements, leases for arable land in which the tenant promises to hand over half the crop to the landowner, occur mainly in the fourth century. This is a sure sign of economic distress and suggests that the tenants too were in a crisis at the time. I would not like to interpret the low rent they paid as a sign of improved bargaining power on the part of tenants *per se* (along the lines of Kehoe 1996). High productivity, prosperous tenants and high rents go together hand in hand in a predominantly agrarian economy, and so do low productivity, poor tenants and low rents. We have to assume that the population, which had been reduced in the century following Marcus Aurelius, took another hit when the bottom fell out of the economy after 275.

This leads to the third period in the history of the Egyptian economy of Late Antiquity. The less well-known fifth century and the sixth witnessed a partial recovery. The good points the age of Justinian scores as against the fourth century are the following. There was no inflation anymore to speak of. Agricultural yields also improved, although not to pre-275 levels, let alone pre-plague levels. The rent increased by 20–25% over against the fourth century. There are now fewer leases specifying exact amounts of produce as rent on arable land, because rents on this type of land are more often expressed in money than before. This is in itself a clear sign that the economy (accessibility of markets to tenants to exchange produce for cash) or at least the currency (ready availability of cash everywhere, even in villages) was in good shape. We may also expect that the urban economy profited from the abolition of the urban craftsmen's taxes at the end of the fifth century. The bubonic plague in the middle of the sixth century may have had significant long-term effects, and its immediate effects must have been disastrous, but the bubonic plague, unlike the Antonine Plague, added no permanent strain on the demography of Egypt in Late Antiquity. The inability of the economy of later Roman Egypt to restore itself to pre-plague or even pre-275 levels is at any rate surprising. No one was willing to limit the extraction of able-bodied men for the army (and out of the productive flow) at pre-plague levels (or worse) and/or the extraction of taxes on land at (much) increased levels.

In the preceding, I have used changes in the rent specified in leases as a reliable indication of overall productivity in the Egyptian economy. This is unexceptionable, but a few points bear pointing out. The Egyptian economy was largely based on agriculture, so we do not have to look elsewhere to find crucial data. Within agriculture, arable land was by far the most important, and the most important form of agriculture on arable land was growing wheat, not only because it constituted the most important foodstuff, but also because it was collected as a tax in kind by the state. Of all kinds of land, privately owned land was by far the most common, certainly so in Late Antiquity. Leases for privately owned land grown with wheat constitute almost half of all leases. In the early Roman period, most rents specified in these leases were fixed amounts of wheat

in kind. In Late Antiquity, more and more leases simply specified an amount of money. This makes statistical conclusions drawn from the later evidence less reliable than for the earlier period, but more sophisticated use of the leases specifying a money rent could yield important support for my conclusions (or not).

The fact that money rents are more common in Late Antiquity can be explained with reference to the widespread use of the new gold currency introduced by Constantine, which stabilized the monetary situation and benefited not just the elite, as BANAJ (2001) thinks, but also everyone else, by lowering real prices over time. The fact that money rents are more common in Late Antiquity can also be explained with reference to the increased access to markets on the part of the tenants. Maybe the landowners were less interested in commercializing the products of their land themselves, less so than, e.g., Appianus had been in the third century – maybe they were lazier than before, a characterization that seems not unfitting for the Apiones of Oxyrhynchus. A much simpler reason why tenants had better access to markets in Late Antiquity may be that leases (certainly the ones from Hermopolis) are now for land located within close proximity of the cities. In the earlier Roman period, urban landowners had owned land at greater distance from the cities as well. Such land was now in the hands of rural dwellers or it had gone out of commission altogether because of its location.

I have divided Roman Egypt into four periods in what follows, using centuries rather than the more natural divisions I have given above so as not to prejudice the outcome. The evidence comes mainly from the Hermopolite nome, which yields a continuous series of hundreds of usable leases, and from the Heracleopolite and Oxyrhynchite nomes. Starting in the third century, leases from troubled villages in the Fayyum skew the data so much that I have refrained from including evidence from the Arsinoite nome altogether. I will go methodically through five steps:

Step 1: First I give the data about *the amount of rent for the private landowner* directly derived from the hundreds of published leases with usable data. I have used the leases of private arable land grown with wheat that specify a fixed amount of wheat as rent per surface unit (see also van Minnen 2000a for a graphic representation of the data).

period in centuries	I/II	III	IV	V/VI
rent in <i>artabas</i>	8	6.25	4.5	5.5

The data could eventually be enriched with those from rents in money, but the trend is unmistakable.

Step 2: Next I give *the amount kept by the tenant of private land*. Except for the first two centuries of Roman rule, the average rent must have been close enough to 50% to warrant a simple extrapolation from step 1. Population pressure and especially demand for land in the first two centuries may have given the landowner a premium. The 8 *artabas* the landowner got to keep in that period therefore represent 50% plus a small premium, say 0.5 *artaba*. In the same period the tenant got to keep, not half, which would have been 7.5, but 7.5 *artabas* less a small premium, say 0.5 *artaba*.

period in centuries	I/II	III	IV	V/VI
tenant's share in <i>artabas</i>	7	6.25	4.5	5.5

One could argue that the smaller population of the later periods may have resulted in a larger than 50% share for the tenant.²⁴ However, in leases from the fourth century that stipulate a share of the arable crop rather than a fixed amount, the share is exactly 50%. The premium of the first two centuries gave the landowner an advantage of 1 *artaba* over the tenant. This premium disappears in the third century.

Step 3: Third comes *the total product on private land*. Steps 1 and 2 only need to be added up for this.

period in centuries	I/II	III	IV	V/VI
total product in <i>artabas</i>	15	12.5	9	11

The situation in the third century was worse than in the first two centuries, that in the fourth century was much worse than in the third century, but things improved between the fourth and the sixth century.

Step 4: Fourth come *the taxes on private land*. The average tax on private land is approximately known for the entire period. I have not attempted to correct received opinion about this, so I have followed JONES (1964) and BAGNALL (1985a)²⁵ rather than DUNCAN-JONES (1994).

period in centuries	I/II	III	IV	V/VI
tax in <i>artabas</i>	1.25	1.25	1.75	2.75

An increasing part of the tax is paid in money from the fourth century onwards, so I have had to use an equivalent amount of wheat to arrive at a composite figure. The basic rate of the tax in kind stayed fairly constant at 1.25 *artabas*. The additional taxes in money made the later figures considerably higher than the earlier ones.

Step 5: Fifth comes *the net amount the private landowner kept after taxes* (rent minus taxes). Again, this is a simple calculation based on steps 1 and 4.

period in centuries	I/II	III	IV	V/VI
amount in <i>artabas</i>	6.75	5	2.75	2.75

If we look at the decline from the first two centuries to the third, implied by step 3 (from 15 to 12.5 *artabas*), we notice that the drop (2.5 *artabas*) affected both the tenant (0.75 *artaba* according to step 2) and the landowner (1.75 *artaba* according to step 1). The latter is affected more than the former, because the landowner lost the premium of the first two centuries (1 *artaba*). If we next look at the decline from the third to the fourth century implied by step 3 (from 12.5 to

²⁴ I operated with a margin up- and downward from 50% for rents on arable land in van Minnen 2001b. I now think that there was at most an upward pressure on the rent in the earlier period.

²⁵ Bagnall 1985a calculates 1.59 *artabas* for the fourth century, a figure that includes the higher rates on formerly public land. I have ignored these as I did for the first two centuries of Roman rule. To his figure, Bagnall adds 0.5 *artaba* in money taxes. For the fifth/sixth century, he calculates an overall figure of 2.63 *artabas*. It is not the place here to argue about the fourth-century rate, which is less well known than the later rates. The conversion of the money tax into an *artaba* equivalent is beset with problems, but I have followed Bagnall's calculations for this.

9 *artabas*), we notice that the drop (3.5 *artabas*) affected the tenant and the landowner equally. We also notice that the landowner lost an extra 0.5 *artaba* in taxes (step 5). The landowner did not pass the added tax burden on to the tenant, perhaps because the tenants (now even less numerous than in the third century) had improved their bargaining power.

If we finally look at the recovery from the fourth through the sixth century implied by step 3 (from 9 to 11 *artabas*), we notice that the tenant got one of the two extra *artabas* (step 2). So did the landowner (step 1), but step 4 shows that the landowner had to hand over that extra *artaba* as additional taxes on land to the state. Again, the landowner was not able to pass the additional tax burden on to the tenant. The perhaps startling but unavoidable conclusion is that the recovery from the fourth through the sixth century benefited the tenant and the state, not the landowner.

So, who got the better of whom? Traditionally Late Antiquity has been regarded as a period in which the big urban landowners got the better of the state. For this view, there is no evidence from Egypt. All urban landowners duly paid their share of taxes and even cooperated with the state in the collection of taxes (see Gasco 1985). If the recovery between the fourth and the sixth century was evenly split between the tenant and the state, the urban landowners, including the big ones, held on to the short end of the stick. The state in Late Antiquity was more powerful than the big landowners, and this confirms my previous point about the shift of taxes onto the land.

Conclusion

There is still a lot that one would like to cover in this contribution. I have merely sketched some of the parameters within which cities operated. The urban elite in Late Antiquity suffered severe setbacks. Their income declined along with the decline of the total product – of which they controlled only a portion (15% in the fourth century according to the *Landlisten*), a portion moreover that probably did not increase over time. The income of the urban elite, primarily based on the ownership of land as it was, also declined because land was taxed much more heavily in Late Antiquity than before. This meant that either the urban elite as a whole became poorer or that they became less numerous. Both processes seem to have been at work at the same time. A decline in numbers of those belonging to the urban elite in Late Antiquity is a traditional topic in the secondary literature on Egyptian cities, as it already was in contemporary literature from other parts of the later Empire. In addition, the cities themselves lost a good part of their income, first, because incomes dropped in general, and second, because the state arrogated the control over a good part of the income of cities.

Urban landowners in Late Antiquity could only have improved their lot by acquiring more land – but how could they when their income had dropped? By the fourth century, the rural population had acquired the bulk of the state land put up for sale according to the *Landlisten*. Urban landowners could try to acquire

land from other urban landowners, through a process of attrition whereby the less wealthy landowners had to give up to the more resilient ones. Another way to improve their lot may have been the investment in cash crops, say viticulture. This is what BANAJI (2001) has recently argued, but again the question is: where did urban landowners interested in investing in cash crops get the money from, once their incomes dropped? Moreover, I doubt whether there really was an expansion of viticulture over against the earlier Roman period. Were vineyards in that period not more evenly spread among more owners, generating more investments than in Late Antiquity, dominated by fewer (and relatively more lazy) owners?

Both processes, the crunch of the urban elite and the impoverishment of the cities, led to a different kind of city, even in Egypt. Although the 'classical' Graeco-Roman city was late in coming in Egypt, since the second century, when expenditure in the cities peaked, they were starting to look like cities elsewhere. There was, however, little time for euergetism, well known in other parts of the Empire, to come to full bloom (see van Minnen 2000b). Major contributions to urban finances took the form of quota imposed on magistrates. In the third century, expenditure in Egyptian cities was already much reduced, notwithstanding the larger number of individuals participating in the running of the cities after the introduction of the councils, and by the fourth century it had become impossible to do much of anything without going to great length. Egyptian cities had been required since the second century to seek the permission of the Roman government for the public expenditures they considered. This did not change in Late Antiquity (see, e.g., CPR XXIII 32 of 450) except that this now became common elsewhere in the Empire as well. A quota system became the commonest form for contributions to urban finances everywhere.

The process by which Egyptian cities were '*gleichgeschaltet*' with cities elsewhere in the Empire and especially *vice versa* is a fascinating one. No one in the second century could mistake the cities of Egypt for 'real' cities notwithstanding the fact that civic expenditures started to have an impact on the urban centers in Egypt as well. In the sixth century cities in the Empire had become similar everywhere. A lot of this can be put down as change and appreciated positively (e.g. the impact of the same kind of Christianity everywhere). In the context of a colloquium on the work of LIEBESCHUETZ (2001), it is perhaps more fitting to end with a less positive aspect, at least from the perspective of the rest of the Empire. By the sixth century, cities elsewhere had declined to the level of Egyptian cities.

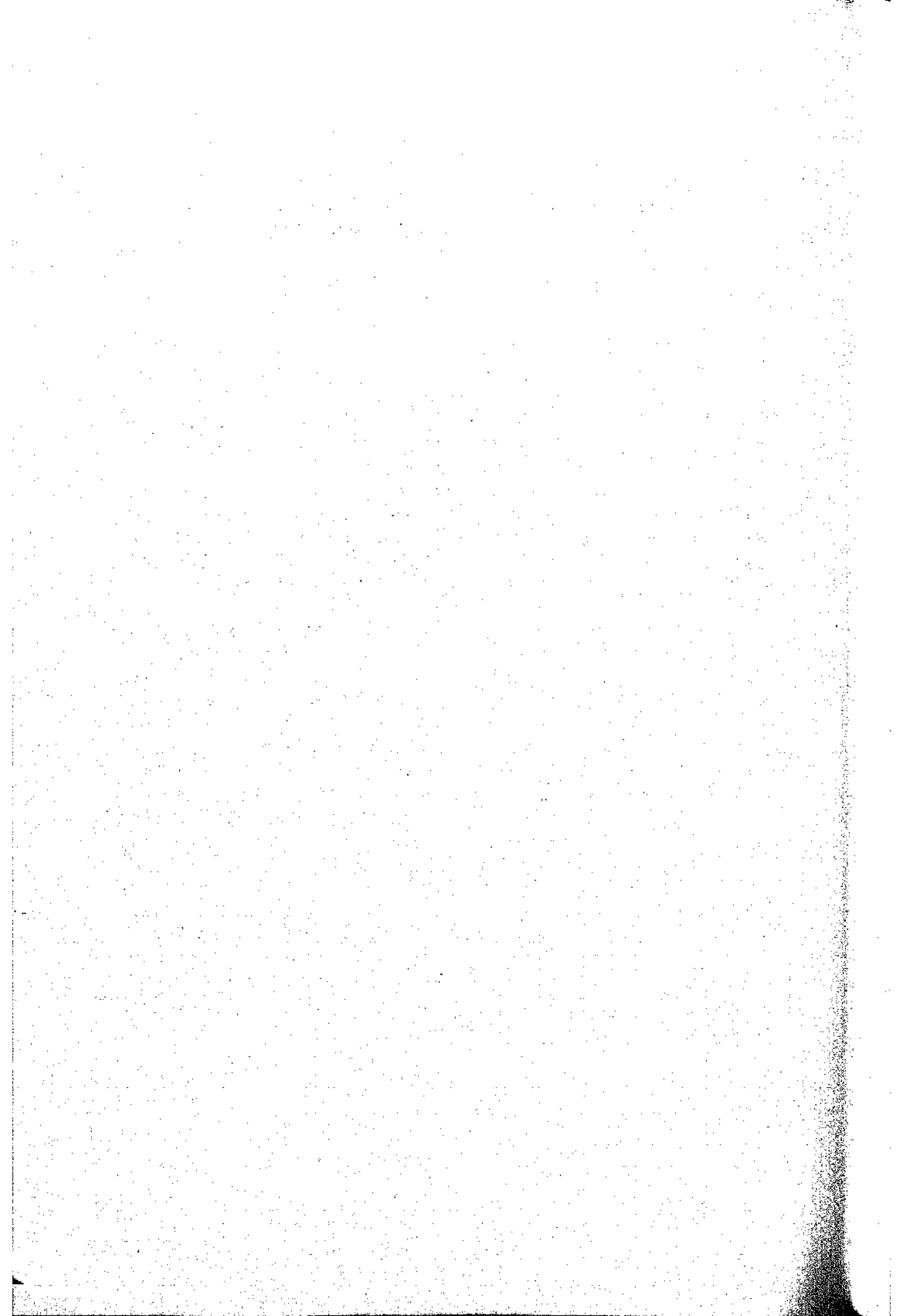
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„Niedergang oder Wandel?“ – Die spätantiken Städte in Syrien und Palästina aus archäologischer Sicht

STEPHAN WESTPHALEN (Göttingen)

Um der gestellten Frage nach dem Niedergang oder Wandel der spätantiken Städte näherzukommen, speziell denen aus den Provinzen Syriens und Palästinas, beschränke ich mich auf das archäologische Material, d.h. auf die Bauwerke in ihrem städtebaulichen Zusammenhang, soweit sie sich im Rahmen eines Stadtplans rekonstruieren lassen. Allerdings ist das Material so reichhaltig und bietet derartig viele Möglichkeiten für unterschiedliche Deutungsansätze – etwa sozialer, ökonomischer oder strategisch-militärischer Art –, daß in dem begrenzten Rahmen weitere Einschränkungen nötig sind. Ich werde mich daher auf das äußere Erscheinungsbild der Städte und auf Fragen nach der Kontinuität und Tradition im Städtebau konzentrieren, mit der Absicht, den regionalen Besonderheiten sowie den für Syrien und Palästina typischen Voraussetzungen nachzugehen.

Zweifellos steht der byzantinische Städtebau in hellenistisch-römischer Tradition und gehört damit zu den „eintausend Jahre[n] der klassischen Antike“, die Eugen WIRTH in seinem Überblickswerk über die orientalische Stadt „fast nur wie ein Zwischenspiel“ erscheinen; ein Zwischenspiel, das mit seinen eigenen Regeln die Kontinuität zwischen den Städten des Alten Orients und den strukturell eng verwandten Städten islamischer Zeit unterbrochen habe.¹ Dieser nach Westen weisende Traditionsstrang ist aber nur die eine Seite der Medaille, denn auf der anderen Seite steht das Phänomen, daß sich gleichzeitig in den Steppengebieten – an der Peripherie der zivilisierten Welt – dauerhafte Siedlungen etablieren können, deren Struktur mit einer regional geprägten Stammeskultur zusammenzuhängen scheint.

Im folgenden werden zunächst die Hauptstädte eine Rolle spielen wie Antiocheia oder Apameia, Caesarea und Bosra, ferner werden Damaskus, Palmyra und Gerasa wie auch Zenobia genannt. Zusätzlich soll aber auch auf eine Gruppe von Kleinstädten und Dörfern im heutigen Nordjordanien eingegangen werden, an der unter dem Stichwort „Urbanisierung der Steppe“ die regionalen Siedlungsmuster aufgezeigt werden können. Stellvertretend seien Umm al-Djermal, Khirbet es-Samra und Umm ar-Rasas genannt.

¹ Wirth 2000, 10. 30.

Spätantike Städtebilder

Der hellenistisch-römischen Tradition waren sich zumindest Teile der Bevölkerung offensichtlich bewußt gewesen, wie sich auch an zwei Mosaikdarstellungen belegen läßt. So findet sich in Madaba die Tyche der Stadt als thronende Frauenfigur, durch eine rote Beischrift hervorgehoben, in einer etwas merkwürdigen Reihe mit der rätselhaften Gregoria und der Roma. Dabei ist zu fragen, welche aktuelle Bedeutung Rom für die Provinz Arabia im sechsten Jahrhundert, als das Mosaik geschaffen wurde, überhaupt noch spielte, oder ob durch einen Rückgriff auf ältere Bildtraditionen nicht vielmehr das hohe Alter der Stadt Madaba ausgedrückt werden sollte.² Das zweite Mosaik wurde erst vor wenigen Jahren in Umm ar-Rasas, dem zur Diözese Madaba gehörenden Kastron Mefaa, aufgedeckt.³ Es ist Teil eines Kirchenbodens des achten Jahrhunderts und gehört zu einer Reihe von Städtebildern, die geographisch die Gebiete Palästinas, Transjordanien und Ägyptens umfaßt. Ranggleich mit Jerusalem steht das Kastron Mefaa am Anfang dieser Reihe – in der Vignette mit Stadtmauer und einem Säulenmonument in einer unbefestigten Vorstadt dargestellt. Auch wenn in dieser Zeit – d.h. bereits nach dem Zusammenbruch der umayyadischen Dynastie – die topographischen Bezüge zwischen den dargestellten Städten eine Retrospektive auf vergangene Zeiten sein dürften, ist das Mosaik mit seiner Datierung in das Jahr 785 ein später Beleg für die kontinuierliche Wirkung spätantiker Bildvorstellungen von einer Stadt (s.u.).

Auf literarischer Ebene findet sich Vergleichbares bei Prokop, der Justinian wiederholt als einen Renovator antiken Städtebaus feiert, wenn er ihm neben Bauwerken der Verteidigung und der Wasserversorgung auch Häuser, öffentliche Bäder, Wandelhallen und die sonstigen Bauten zuschreibt: „was eben gewöhnlich einer Stadt zum Schmuck dient“ (Prokop, de. aed. 2, 9, 7). Diese Passagen über die eine Stadt prägenden Bauwerke erinnern stark an Pausanias (10, 4, 1), der bereits rund vierhundert Jahre früher im Zusammenhang mit der phokischen Polis Panopeus fragte, ob man trotz des rechtlichen Status überhaupt von einer Stadt sprechen könne, wenn sie nicht über repräsentative Amtsgebäude, Gymnasien, Theater, Marktplätze, Aquädukte und Brunnen verfüge. Es dürfte demnach ganz im Sinn der beiden Autoren sein, wenn man bei der Definition einer antiken Stadt auch das Kriterium des äußeren Erscheinungsbildes einer Siedlung zugrundelegt.⁴

² Piccirillo 1993, Abb. 10; Bühl 1995, 121, 134.

³ Piccirillo 1993, Abb. 347.

⁴ Zum Stadtbegriff des 6. Jhs., der abnehmenden Bedeutung des Stadtrechts und der Rolle öffentlicher Bauwerke für die Wirkung einer ‚richtigen‘ Stadt s. auch Claude 1969, 195–203. Nach Baldwin 1982 war die byzantinische Definition einer zivilisierten Stadt im wesentlichen eine klassische, allerdings mit Kirchen anstatt der Tempel und zusätzlichen karitativen Einrichtungen. Ausgehend von dem Wandel im Sprachgebrauch, bei dem sich in den Quellen des 6. bis 8. Jhs. die Bezeichnung Kastron allmählich als Synonym für Polis durchsetzte, sieht W. Brandes dagegen in der Befestigung das hauptsächliche Merkmal einer byzantinischen Stadt, während die Bauwerke der antiken Stadtkultur zunehmend an Bedeutung verloren (Brandes 1989, 28–43). Zu dem Sprachwandel von der Polis zum Kastron s. auch Kirsten 1958 und Dölger 1962.

Impulse für den Städtebau

Im Unterschied zu weiten Teilen des Reichs ist in Syrien bis in das sechste Jahrhundert kein Rückgang der Bevölkerung zu verzeichnen. Das Gegenteil ist der Fall: Wie aus großflächigen Siedlungssurveys zu erschließen ist, erreichte die Besiedlung zwischen dem vierten und sechsten Jahrhundert eine bis dahin unbekannte Dichte.⁵ Das hatte zur Folge, daß einerseits die älteren Städte – von wenigen Ausnahmen wie etwa Palmyra abgesehen – ohne nennenswerte Schrumpfungsprozesse kontinuierlich besiedelt wurden und sich andererseits die Grenze selbsthafter Siedlungsformen bis weit in aride Steppengebiete verschob. Aus Konzilsakten und anderen spätantiken Listen sind Bischöfe von rund 160 Städten bekannt.⁶ Hinzu kommen kleinere Siedlungen in beachtlicher Zahl; allein im nordsyrischen Kalksteinmassiv sollen es drei- bis vierhundert sein, die zwischen dem vierten und sechsten Jahrhundert florierten.⁷ Mit der demographischen Entwicklung hängen weitere Impulse für den Städtebau zusammen:

Erstens wurden Städte selbst nach natürlichen Katastrophen wie Epidemien oder Erdbeben nicht aufgegeben, sondern wieder aufgebaut. Zweitens wurde nach der Provinzeinteilung des vierten Jahrhunderts eine Reihe älterer Städte zu Verwaltungszentren ausgebaut. Drittens konnten im Grenzgebiet strategische Gründe für den Ausbau oder die Neugründung von Städten ausschlaggebend sein. Und viertens verhalf nach der Christianisierung das Pilgerwesen selbst bescheidenen Siedlungen, wenn sie attraktive Reliquien besaßen, zu Wohlstand mit den entsprechenden Auswirkungen auf deren urbanistische Entwicklung.⁸

Für die erste Kategorie, den nach einer Katastrophe wieder aufgebauten Städten, sei Antiocheia genannt. Gemessen an der Bedeutung als Hauptstadt der Diözese *Oriens* ist Antiocheia aus archäologischer Sicht bekanntlich nahezu unerforscht.⁹ Von einer osmanischen Kleinstadt und dem modernen Antakya überbaut, ansonsten unter meterhohen Schwemmschichten verschüttet, konnte von den vielen literarisch überlieferten Monumenten nur ein Bruchteil ausgegraben werden. Immerhin ist im modernen Areal noch ungefähr der Verlauf der

⁵ Bei den Surveys in Jordanien (Ibach 1987; MacDonald 1988; MacDonald 1992; Miller 1991) stellt das byzantinische Material noch vor dem kaiserzeitlichen den größten Anteil. Für die Bevölkerungsentwicklung von der tetrarchischen bis in die justinianische Zeit ist das allerdings nur bedingt aussagekräftig, da die frühe Keramik des 3./4. Jhs. nicht von der späteren des 6./7. Jhs. unterschieden wurde; zu der Problematik s. auch Parker 2000, 383.

⁶ Jones 1937, 531–535 mit den Bischofssitzen der Provinzen Syria I und II, Euphratensis, Phoenicia, Phoenicia libanensis, Arabia und Palaestina I bis III.

⁷ Mattern 1944; Tchalenko 1953; Tate 1992.

⁸ Claude 1969, 203–223 unterscheidet an den Städtegründungen des 6. Jhs. vier Kategorien: An erster Stelle stehen die wenigen „Dynastischen Gründungen“ wie Justiniana Prima, die in Syrien und Palästina nicht vertreten sind. Die zweite Gruppe der „Heiligen Städte“ entspricht meiner vierten Gruppe und ist u.a. durch Resafa oder Abu Mena in der Mareotis vertreten, zur dritten Gruppe zählt Claude die aus Kastellen aufgestiegenen Städte und zur vierten die zu Städten erhobenen Dörfer.

⁹ Allgemein Downey 1961, 503–578. Speziell zur spät- und nachantiken Stadt: Kennedy 1992; Foss 1997, 190–197 und Foss 2000.

Säulenstraße zu erkennen, die das antike Stadtgebiet auf einer Länge von rund drei Kilometern durchzog.¹⁰ Jean LASSUS, der die Ergebnisse der amerikanischen Ausgrabungen der dreißiger Jahre veröffentlichte, unterschied in einer schematischen Stratigraphie bis in eine Tiefe von elf Metern neun verschiedene Niveaus. Auf Niveau 6 liegt in einer Tiefe von 5,50 m ein rekonstruierter Ausschnitt der Säulenstraße, der dem sechsten Jahrhundert und damit dem Wiederaufbau unter Justinian nach 540 zugeordnet wird.¹¹ Mit der breiten Fahrbahn und den mosaik ausgelegten Gehwegen wird das vorausgehende Niveau 5 mit der kaiserzeitlichen Säulenstraße sogar übertroffen, so daß man in Antiocheia selbst nach schweren Heimsuchungen wie Pest und Erdbeben oder der persischen Brandschatzung noch nicht von einem Niedergang des antiken Städtebaus reden kann.

Für die zweite Kategorie, den zu einem Verwaltungszentrum ausgebauten Städten, steht die Hafenstadt Caesarea, die ihre größte Ausdehnung in byzantinischer Zeit erreichte, nachdem sie in den Rang einer Provinzhauptstadt erhoben wurde.¹² Die Entwicklung ist an den Siedlungsringen ablesbar, die konzentrisch um das Hafenbecken als Nukleus entstanden. Der mittlere Ring markiert die Ausdehnung der herodianischen und kaiserzeitlichen Stadt, um den sich als äußerer Wachstumsring die beträchtliche Erweiterung des byzantinischen Stadtgebiets legt. Das innere Areal mit der rechteckigen Stadtmauer der Kreuzfahrer gehört hingegen zu einem nachantiken Schrumpfungsprozeß und ist in unserem Zusammenhang nicht weiter von Interesse.¹³ In bester Lage an der Corniche, unmittelbar südlich der mittelalterlichen Stadtmauer, wurde in den letzten Jahren eine repräsentative Gebäudegruppe freigelegt, die man mit guten Gründen als Prätorium des Prokonsuls, als Amtssitz des zivilen Gouverneurs der Provinz Palästina prima interpretiert.¹⁴ Zu der Residenz gehören ein öffentlicher Bereich mit Vorhof und Audienzhalle sowie ein nördlich anschließender Verwaltungstrakt mit Archiv und einem Bürogebäude und schließlich ein Privatbad. Die privaten Wohnräume werden auf der bislang noch nicht ausgegrabenen Nordseite angenommen. Die Residenz wurde im mittleren fünften Jahrhundert angelegt und blieb bis in das siebte Jahrhundert in Funktion. Sie steht auf einer älteren Substruktion, deren tonnengewölbte Kammern als Lagerräume oder Getreidespeicher dienten und so auch räumlich der direkten Aufsicht des Gouverneurs unterstellt waren. Im Skrinion des Verwaltungstrakts hat sich durch Inschriften in den Fußbodenmosaiken in seltener Deutlichkeit ein in diesen Räumen tätiges Bürokollegium in Erinnerung gehalten, wie auch gleich zweimal ein Zitat aus dem

¹⁰ Zum antiken Straßennetz, das sich noch auf den Luftbildern der dreißiger Jahre abzeichnete, vgl. zuletzt Leblanc/Poccardi 1999.

¹¹ Lassus 1972, 125 mit Plan 69, revidiert die in der älteren Literatur vertretene Meinung, daß die Mezzeh nach dem justinianischen Wiederaufbau nur noch einseitig mit einem Gehweg ausgestattet war, s. etwa Downey 1961, Abb. 10. Allgemein zum justinianischen Wiederaufbau s. ebd., 546–553 und Foss 1997, 193.

¹² Vann 1992; Holum 1992; Raban/Holum 1996; Holum/Raban/Patrich 1999; Patrich 2001.

¹³ Luftaufnahmen des Stadtgebiets und Übersichtspläne bei Raban/Holum 1996, xii–xxvi sowie Faltpäne am Ende des Bands.

¹⁴ Patrich 1999; Lavan 1999, 153ff.; aktueller Grundriß auch bei Lavan 2001, Abb. 4.

Römerbrief den Besucher mahnte, daß man die Obrigkeit nicht zu fürchten brauche wegen guter Taten.¹⁵

Für die dritte Kategorie, den aus strategischen Gründen neu angelegten Städten, ist auf Zenobia-Halebiye am Euphrat zu verweisen.¹⁶ Prokop berichtete, daß Justinian als Reaktion auf die verheerenden Folgen des Persereinfalls von 540 das Verteidigungssystem an der östlichen Reichsgrenze restaurieren ließ und zwei junge Ingenieure – Johannes von Konstantinopel und Isidor von Milet – nach Syrien sandte und sie auch mit der Planung und Aufsicht über die Befestigung von Zenobia beauftragte (Prokop, *de aed.* 2, 8, 8–25). Die starken Stadtmauern verhinderten freilich nicht, daß Zenobia bereits im frühen siebten Jahrhundert von den Persern unter Chosroes II. zerstört und danach aufgegeben wurde. Aus diesem Grund von jüngerer Überbauung verschont, bietet Zenobia auf vergleichsweise kleinem Areal den seltenen Eindruck einer gut erhaltenen byzantinischen Neugründung, bei der neben fortifikatorischen Erfordernissen ein deutlicher Anspruch an die repräsentative Gestaltung der öffentlichen Bauwerke zu erkennen ist. Die Mauern schützen ein ungefähr dreieckiges Areal. Kernstück der Befestigung waren die dreigeschossigen Bastionen; unter ihnen das sogenannte „Prätorium“, das als herausragendes Beispiel spätantiker Militärarchitektur gilt. Innerhalb der Mauern verläuft eine Säulenstraße zwischen dem nördlichen und südlichen Stadttor, ihre Kreuzung mit einer Querstraße wird durch ein Tetrapylon hervorgehoben. Öffentliche Bauwerke wie eine flußnahe Therme mit Palästra oder eine Porticus am Decumanus sind in ihrer Anlage am mehr oder minder rechtwinkligen Straßengitter ausgerichtet. Gleiches gilt für die Westkirche, während die Ostkirche von dem vorherrschenden Raster abweicht, was zu der Vermutung führte, in ihr die ältere, noch vor 540 entstandene Kathedrale der Siedlung zu sehen.

Offensichtlich wurde in Zenobia an hellenistisch-römische Traditionen des Städtebaus angeknüpft, und zwar in einer Weise, die exemplarisch den reichsweiten Tendenzen ab dem vierten Jahrhundert entspricht. So waren die Städte fast ausnahmslos durch eine Mauer geschützt. Sie wurden zunehmend von der Christianisierung geprägt, die den Bischöfen zusätzliche Kompetenzen verschaffte, während die kuriale Selbstverwaltung allmählich an Bedeutung verlor. Dies hatte zur Folge, daß im Stadtbild bürgerliche und imperiale Stiftungen öffentlicher Bauwerke zunehmend vom Kirchenbau und karitativen Einrichtungen verdrängt wurden, während Bäder oder Theater und Hippodrome wie auch luxuriös ausgestattete Wohnhäuser wohlhabender Grundbesitzer oder hochrangiger Beamter als Ausdruck urbaner Lebensform erhalten blieben.¹⁷

¹⁵ Holum 1995.

¹⁶ Lauffray 1983/91; Di Maffei 1990; Brands 2002, 262–265.

¹⁷ Über öffentliche Bauwerke in byzantinischen Städten bietet Claude 1969, 69–106 eine allgemeine Übersicht. Zur Kategorisierung der Bauwerke und ihrer epigraphischen Bezeichnung in den Provinzen Arabia und Palästina s. Di Segni 1999, 150–158. Einzeluntersuchungen liegen u.a. zu kommerziell genutzten Bauwerken (Mundell Mango 2000) wie auch zu Palästen (Lavan 1999; Lavan 2001), Bischofsresidenzen (Müller-Wiener 1989) oder Bädern (Berger 1982) vor.

Säulenstraßen als städtebauliches Element und ihre Transformation

Von den repräsentativen öffentlichen Bauwerken werden im Stadtbild besonders die Säulenstraßen wahrgenommen. Im seleukidischen Antiocheia oder ptolemäischen Alexandria zum ersten Mal angelegt, zählen sie mit ihren häufig kilometerlangen Säulenreihen zu den wichtigsten Kriterien für die prägende Wirkung hellenistisch-römischer Formen auf die Urbanistik in den östlichen Provinzen.¹⁸ Allerdings ist ihre Bedeutung zu differenzieren, indem man zwischen äußerer Form einerseits und ihrer Funktion und Struktur andererseits unterscheidet.

Eine etwas sterile Rekonstruktion der dreißiger Jahre¹⁹ zeigt den *Cardo* von Apameia als endlos wirkende Säulenreihe und betont damit vor allem den formalen Aspekt, während sie nichts von dem regen Handelstreiben wiedergibt, das dank künstlicher Beleuchtung rund um die Uhr möglich war. Denn die Säulenstraße war mit ihren zweistöckigen Ladenlokalen vor allem Umschlagsplatz und übernahm noch vor der Agora die kommerziellen Aufgaben der Stadt.²⁰

In Apameia im fünften Jahrhundert renoviert, in Antiocheia im sechsten Jahrhundert wiederaufgebaut oder in Zenobia planmäßig angelegt – Säulenstraßen blieben ein wesentliches städtebauliches Element bis in byzantinische Zeit.²¹ Gleichzeitig setzte aber ein Phänomen ein, das gelegentlich als ‚Wildwuchs‘ bezeichnet und gemeinhin erst mit der Islamisierung antiker Städte in Verbindung gebracht wird.²² Die Ladenlokale wurden zur Straßenmitte hin erweitert, indem man die Gehwege schrittweise überbaute, wobei der gleichbleibende Rhythmus der Säulenstellungen die Einteilung weiterhin bestimmte. Erst kürzlich wurde in Petra ein entsprechendes Ensemble behutsam konserviert, zu dem ein in die Säulenreihe eingesteter Laden aus byzantinischer Zeit gehört.²³ Der ‚Wildwuchs‘ ist kein generelles Phänomen der byzantinischen oder islamisierten Stadt, sondern lediglich ein Indiz dafür, daß Bauvorschriften nur noch auf dem Papier bestanden, in der Öffentlichkeit aber nicht mehr geachtet wurden und keine Mittel zur Verfügung standen, sie in die Praxis umzusetzen.²⁴ Häufig abgebildet ist das Modell von Jean SAUVAGET, das die Umformung einer antiken Säulenstraße in den *Suq* einer islamisierten Stadt wiedergibt.²⁵ Es wurde durch

¹⁸ Zu Säulenstraßen allgemein immer noch grundlegend Lehmann-Hartleben 1929. Einen aktuellen Überblick der Säulenstraßen von ihren Anfängen bis in umayyadische Zeit bietet Bejor 1999, 125–128, während Segal 1997, 5–53 die kaiserzeitlichen Säulenstraßen in den Provinzen Syriens, Palästinas und Arabiens behandelt.

¹⁹ *Musées Royaux* o.J., Abb. I, 3, 4.

²⁰ Zur Säulenstraße Balty 1981, 46–52. Über das spätantike Apameia und Renovierungen der Säulenstraße im 5. und 6. Jh. s. Foss 1997, 207f.

²¹ Meines Wissens fehlt bislang eine gründliche archäologische Arbeit speziell zu den spätantiken und byzantinischen Anlagen, s. aber die Einträge bei Claude, 1969, 60–62; Kennedy 1985, 11 und Bejor 1999, 106f.

²² Wirth 2000, 34ff.; Kennedy 1985, 12.

²³ Egan/Bikai 1999, 509 Abb. 21, 22.

²⁴ Zu Unregelmäßigkeiten in der Straßenführung und dem Versuch, sie durch baupolizeiliche Vorschriften zu regulieren, s. Claude 1969, 41–54.

²⁵ Sauvaget 1934; Bejor 1999, Abb. 96; Wirth 2000, Abb. 14.

den umayyadischen Suq in Palmyra vor einigen Jahren auch archäologisch bestätigt.²⁶ Fielen wie in Petra zunächst die Gehwege der allmählichen Überbauung zum Opfer, so wurden am Ende der Entwicklung auch die breiten Fahrbahnen als Baugrund genutzt und mit dichten Reihen von Verkaufsbuden bestellt; ein städtebaulicher Prozeß mit so weitreichenden Folgen für den Straßenverkehr, daß er meiner Meinung nach – im Gegensatz zum ‚Wildwuchs‘ – einer offiziellen Genehmigung etwa in der Art eines Bebauungsplans bedurfte. Es ist kein Zufall, daß ungefähr im gleichen Zeitraum zwischen dem vierten und achten Jahrhundert der Warentransport allmählich von Lastwagen auf Packtiere umgestellt wurde, vor allem auf Kamele und Esel, die in den schmalen Seitengassen die Basare beliefern konnten.²⁷ Die Entwicklung von einer breit angelegten Säulenstraße zum engen Suq ist zwar ein gravierender formaler Wandel, die Funktion bleibt im Prinzip aber gleich: Seit den hellenistischen Gründungen über die römischen und byzantinischen Anlagen bis in die islamisierten Städte wird der Handel über lang hingezogene Straßenmärkte abgewickelt.²⁸ Noch im spätoomanischen Damaskus ist die Fassadengliederung des Suq al-Hamidiye²⁹ mit Säulen im Erd- und Pilaster im Obergeschoß wahrscheinlich weniger ein bewußter Rückgriff als vielmehr eine naheliegende formale Lösung, die aus der funktionalen Verwandtschaft zwischen Suq und Säulenstraße resultiert.

Neben seiner kommerziellen Aufgabe übernimmt der Suq al-Hamidiye als Verbindungsstraße zum Hauptheiligtum der Stadt eine weitere städtebauliche Funktion, die vermutlich ebenfalls antike Wurzeln hat: Der Suq endet vor der Umayyadenmoschee, die in langer Kultradition die byzantinische Johannesbasilika ersetzt und innerhalb der Temenosmauer steht, die bereits den römischen Tempel des Jupiter Damaskenos umgrenzte.³⁰ Die Verbindung von Hauptstraße

²⁶ al-Ass'ad/Stepniowski 1989; Bejor 1999, Abb. 97; Wirth 2000, Abb. 15.

²⁷ Bulliet 1975; Kennedy 1985, 26.

²⁸ Es sei nicht verschwiegen, daß die Auffassung einer kontinuierlichen, epochenübergreifenden Funktion der Ladenstraßen auf den ersten Blick in deutlichem Widerspruch zu der von E. Wirth formulierten Definition zu stehen scheint, nach der der Basar (= Suq) ein Geschäftszentrum ist, das es in seiner Art weder im Alten Orient noch in der klassischen Antike oder im europäischen Mittelalter gab. Allerdings sieht auch Wirth in den antiken Säulenstraßen einen direkten Vorläufer der Basargassen, die zusammen mit verschließbaren Hallen und Karawansereien aber nur mehr Teil eines komplexen Basarsystems waren, das in seinen frühesten Ausformungen nicht vor das 14. oder 15. Jh. zurückreichen dürfte. Zuletzt Wirth 2000, 103–151, bes. 137.

²⁹ Sack 1989, 56ff. mit Taf. 26a.

³⁰ Auf den rekonstruierten Stadtplänen des römischen und byzantinischen Damaskus (Watzinger/Wulzinger 1921, Taf. III; Sauvaget 1949, Abb. 15; Sack 1989, Abb. 3, 5) fehlt der Straßenzug des späteren Suq al-Hamidiye, der den Tempelbezirk, genauer dessen äußeren Peribolos, in westlicher Richtung mit einem Tor in der Stadtmauer verbindet, obwohl das westliche Propylon eigentlich einer städtebaulichen Anbindung bedarf (Watzinger/Wulzinger 1921, 20–23 und Rekonstruktion Abb. 1). Meiner Meinung nach ist eine entsprechende Straße spätestens in umayyadischer Zeit vorauszusetzen, als die heute noch erhaltenen Arkaden zwischen dem römischen Propylon des Peribolos und der Westseite des Temenos angelegt wurden (Watzinger/Wulzinger 1921, Abb. 2; Freyberger 1989b, Abb. 4 mit Nr. 35–38, Taf. 19 c), wenn sie nicht schon bereits in byzantinischer Zeit beim Bau der Johannesbasilika und der damit zusammenhängenden Umorientierung des Tempelbezirks erforderlich gewesen sein sollte.

und Heiligtum geht letztlich auf eine alte orientalische Siedlungsstruktur zurück, die sich für eine Reihe antiker Städte wie etwa Palmyra, Bosra oder Gerasa nachweisen läßt.

Besonders deutlich ist der geknickte Verlauf einer alten Straßenführung in Palmyra zu erkennen, die zwar als Säulenstraße römisch überformt und in geradlinige Segmente gegliedert ist, als Prozessionsstraße aber in den Heiligen Bezirk des Beltempels mündet. Knickstellen in der Straßenachse werden durch Monumente wie dem Tetrapylon oder dem Hadriansbogen geschickt kaschiert.³¹ Wie weit die städtebauliche Anlage in byzantinischer Zeit noch funktionierte, ist unbekannt. Auf jeden Fall diente die Cella des Beltempels als Kirche weiterhin sakralen Zwecken.³² In Bosra scheint sich die kaiserzeitlich geprägte Stadtanlage im wesentlichen bis in byzantinische Zeit erhalten zu haben.³³ Kernstück ist die heute noch im Areal erkennbare Säulenstraße, die als gerade Achse das Stadtgebiet in west-östlicher Richtung durchzieht und vor dem sog. ‚Nabatäischen Bogen‘ endet. Östlich schließt sich ein Areal an, in dem eine große Rundkirche des fünften Jahrhunderts freigelegt wurde, wahrscheinlich die Kathedrale, die das pagane Hauptheiligtum ersetzte.³⁴ Selbst dem rechtwinkligen Straßengitter von Gerasa, dessen Hauptstraßen man am ehesten als *Cardo* und *Decumanus* bezeichnen kann, liegt eine vorrömische Struktur zugrunde.³⁵ Sie äußert sich darin, daß der *Cardo* in den ovalen Vorplatz des Zeusheiligtums mündet, während das südliche Stadttor lediglich durch eine diagonal verlaufende Stichstraße an das Straßennetz angebunden ist.

Sehr viel später, im fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert, wurden die gleichen Planungsprinzipien noch einmal wirksam, als in der Mareotis bei Alexandria das Pilgerheiligtum des Abu Mena einen monumentalen Ausbau erfuhr. Auch als „eine der letzten Städtegründungen der Antike“ bezeichnet, wurde die Siedlung durch eine mehrfach geknickte Hauptachse erschlossen, die als Säulenstraße konzipiert und von Ladenzeilen gesäumt war.³⁶ Wie in den kaiserzeitlichen Anlagen von Palmyra, Bosra oder Gerasa war die Straße durch Bogentore gegliedert und mündete im Pilgerhof vor dem Hauptheiligtum der Stadt.

Abu Mena ist eine Siedlung, die ihren städtebaulichen Impuls dem Besitz von attraktiven Reliquien verdankte, genauso wie Resafa-Sergiupolis, das sich durch das eher zufällige Diktat der Heiligenlegende trotz extremer Bedingungen in der Steppe der Euphratensis aus bescheidenen Anfängen zu einer Metropolis entwickeln konnte.³⁷ Beide Siedlungen hatten eine missionarische Wirkung auf die Nomaden in ihrem Umfeld und trugen maßgeblich zu einer Entwicklung bei, die

³¹ Puchstein 1932; Saliou 1996.

³² Zum paganen Beltempel Seyrig/Amy/Will 1975; Freyberger 1998, 74–83. Zum Umbau des Tempels in eine Kirche und deren in Fragmenten erhaltenen Ausmalung s. al-Ass'ad/Ruprechtsberger 1987, 147 Abb. 15, 53 Abb. 8.

³³ Butler 1914, 230–235; Freyberger 1989; Foss 1997, 237ff.

³⁴ Dentzer 1988.

³⁵ Kraeling 1938, Plan 1; Seigne 1992 und 2002; Freyberger 1998, 30f.

³⁶ Grossmann 1999.

³⁷ Honigsmann 1921. Zur städtebaulichen Entwicklung Resafas in den Jahren zwischen 430 und 530 s. Brands 2002, 213ff.

unter dem Stichwort ‚Urbanisierung der Steppe‘ gleich noch eine Rolle spielen wird – freilich auf einer weniger spektakulären Ebene.

Zieht man also ein Zwischenfazit, dann wird deutlich, daß noch in byzantinischer Zeit griechisch-römische Vorstellungen selbst bei der Planung von Kleinstädten wie Abu Mena oder Zenobia wirksam waren. In diesen Kontext gehören die Säulenstraßen, die unter formalen Aspekten eine griechisch-römische Auffassung von der Organisation und repräsentativen Gestaltung des öffentlichen Raums widerspiegeln. Diese Form der Öffentlichkeit war für Eugen WIRTH im Zusammenhang mit der eingangs zitierten Passage ein Kriterium, um die griechisch-römische Tradition als ein rund 1000 Jahre währendes Zwischenspiel in der Geschichte der orientalischen Stadt zu werten. Ihr steht als Gegensatz der abgegrenzte private Bereich gegenüber, der gleichermaßen die altorientalischen und nach langer Zäsur dann wieder die islamisierten Städte geprägt habe.³⁸

‚Urbanisierung‘ der Steppe

So wie aber die Funktion der Säulenstraßen als Marktplatz ihre direkte Fortsetzung in den Basaren der islamisierten Städte findet und damit aus städtebaulicher Sicht eine scharf gezogene Epochengrenze verwischt, so entstehen bereits in byzantinischer Zeit Siedlungen, in denen auf eine Gestaltung des öffentlichen Raums verzichtet wurde. Nach den klassisch geschulten Maßstäben eines Prokop oder Pausanias dürften sie kaum als Stadt bezeichnet werden, fehlen ihnen doch all die Bauten, die „eben gewöhnlich einer Stadt zum Schmuck dienen“ (s.o.). Mißt man die Siedlungen aber mit allgemeineren Kriterien wie Größe, verdichteter Bebauung oder Steinbauweise, sind zumindest Ansätze einer urbanen Siedlungsform nicht zu leugnen.

Umm al-Djermal mit schätzungsweise dreitausend Einwohnern wird beispielsweise Zenobia an Größe übertroffen haben.³⁹ Die Siedlung entwickelte sich an der Stelle eines diokletianischen Kastells, das bis auf die Grundmauern abgetragen wurde. Zwei- bis dreigeschossige Hofhäuser bildeten entlang enger Gassen dicht bebaute Stadtteile, die sich mit großen Freiflächen abwechseln.⁴⁰ Auffällig ist die hohe Zahl an sakralen Bauwerken. Auf 128 Häuser kommen 15 Kirchen, die meisten von einem öffentlichen Zugang abgeschnitten und nur über die Hofhäuser zu erreichen.⁴¹ Schon Howard Crosby BUTLER sah in Umm al-Djermal „die präislamische, christlich-arabische Stadt par excellence, von römischem oder griechischem Einfluß praktisch unberührt und von der Islamisierung nicht betroffen“.⁴²

³⁸ Wirth 2000, 325ff.

³⁹ Die zurückhaltendere Schätzung nach De Vries 1998, 111, im Gegensatz zu Butler 1914, 195, der die Einwohnerzahl auf sieben- bis zehntausend Personen taxierte.

⁴⁰ Zu den Häusern Butler 1914, 194–205 und De Vries 1998, 91–127.

⁴¹ Zu den Kirchen Butler 1914, 171–194; Schick 1995, 469–472; Michel 2001, 166–182 Nr. 32–45.

⁴² Übersetzung nach Butler 1914, 150.

Inzwischen sind vergleichbare Siedlungen in so großer Zahl erforscht, daß an ihnen für das fünfte, sechste und siebte Jahrhundert ein regelrechter Trend erkennbar wird. Waren bis in tetrarchische Zeit die Steppengebiete vor allem von militärischer Bedeutung, so ist ab dem fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert eine deutliche Verschiebung zugunsten des zivilen Sektors festzustellen. Die Grenzkastelle entlang der Via Nova Trajana und der Strata Diocletiana wurden zum Teil aufgelöst und boten Platz für eine Wohnbebauung, die sich ohne verbindliche Planung über alle verfügbaren Flächen ausbreitete.

Gut untersucht ist die Entwicklung beispielsweise in Khirbet es-Samra. Mit geschätzten 450 Einwohnern selbst bei wohlwollender Bewertung nicht als Stadt zu bezeichnen, begünstigte das überschaubare Areal eine vergleichsweise gründliche Erforschung, deren Ergebnisse auch auf das nahe gelegene, aber sehr viel größere Umm al-Djmal übertragbar sind.⁴³ Das diokletianische Kastern im Kern der Siedlung geht auf die militärische Okkupation des Platzes als Wegstation an der Via Nova Trajana zurück. Es wird nach seiner Aufgabe von einer planlos gewachsenen Ansiedlung überbaut, die mit acht Kirchen wieder über einen hohen Anteil an sakralen Bauwerken verfügt.⁴⁴ Datierte Fußbodenmosaiken in den Kirchen belegen eine wirtschaftliche Blüte für das sechste und siebte Jahrhundert, auch wenn die Siedlung noch bis in das neunte Jahrhundert besteht.⁴⁵ Feldsteine dienten als einfache Grabstelen, um die über 5000 Bestattungen in dem ausgedehnten Gräberfeld der Siedlung zu markieren.⁴⁶ Neben Kreuzeszeichen sind auf vielen Steinen auch die Namen der Verstorbenen eingeritzt. Sie belegen einen starken indigenen Bevölkerungsanteil, da die aramäischen Namensformen gegenüber den griechischen und lateinischen überwiegen. Die Herkunft der Bevölkerung ist damit noch nicht geklärt. Man wird sie allerdings nicht von den indigenen Truppenkontingenten ableiten dürfen, die in Khirbet es-Samra stationiert waren, da von einer Zäsur zwischen der militärischen und zivilen Nutzung des Platzes ausgegangen wird. Wie andernorts bieten sich zwei Möglichkeiten an: Entweder führte ein Bevölkerungswachstum zu einer Abwanderung aus älteren Ortschaften und zu Neuansiedlungen in bis dahin vernachlässigten Gebieten oder aber nomadisierende Bevölkerungsteile ließen sich dauerhaft am Rand ihrer angestammten Weidegebiete nieder.⁴⁷ Ein Nebeneinander von sesshaften Ackerbauern und nomadisierenden Viehzüchtern ist deswegen nicht auszuschließen,

⁴³ Humbert/Desreumaux 1998.

⁴⁴ Zu den Kirchen s. Schick 1995, 377f. und Michel 2001, 192–206 Nr. 61–68.

⁴⁵ Zu den Mosaiken Piccirillo 1993, 302–309 und zu deren griechischen Weihinschriften P.-L. Gatier, in: Humbert/Desreumaux 1998, 383–392.

⁴⁶ Humbert/Desreumaux 1998, 259–357, 435–510.

⁴⁷ Villeneuve/Sadler 2001, 185, diskutieren die möglichen Ursachen, die im 2. und 3. Jh. zur Entwicklung von ad-Diayateh führten – einer am klimatisch benachteiligten Osthang des Djebel Druz gelegenen dörflichen Siedlung. Für sie überwiegen die Hinweise auf eine Population, die von den expandierenden ‚Altdörfern‘ des Hauran abstammte, auch wenn als zweite Möglichkeit eine Ansiedlung der nomadisierenden ‚Pseudo-Safaiten‘ nicht ausgeschlossen wird. Das Kastell jedenfalls beeinflusste die Dorfgründung nicht, da es erst später – vermutlich in tetrarchischer Zeit – errichtet wurde.

auch wenn das Konfliktpotential zwischen beiden Lebensformen sehr unterschiedlich beurteilt wird.⁴⁸

Einem vergleichbaren Siedlungsmuster begegnet man in Umm ar-Rasas, etwa 30 km südöstlich von Madaba am Rand der Steppe gelegen.⁴⁹ Den Kern bildet das Kastron Mefaa, das nach seiner Aufgabe von einer zivilen Siedlung okkupiert wurde. Eine funktionierende Befestigung war offensichtlich nicht mehr erforderlich, als man den Zugang auf die Wehrmauern durch die dichte Wohnbebauung verstellte. Auch wurde von den Lagertoren lediglich das nördliche offengelassen, durch das man das für einen Fremden verwirrende Netz aus engen Wegen und Sackgassen betreten konnte.⁵⁰ Da auch bei der Vorstadt, die sich vor dem Lagertor etablierte, auf den Schutz durch eine Stadtmauer verzichtet wurde, wird die Gefahr eines gewalttätigen Konflikts zwischen sesshafter und nomadisierender Lebensform zumindest den Alltag nicht ständig bedroht haben; eher ist an einen symbiotischen Austausch zwischen fester Siedlung und offenem Umland zu denken. Die Bebauung besteht überwiegend aus durch Mauern abgetrennten Hofhäusern, die in ihrer Gleichförmigkeit kaum eine soziale Schichtung der Bewohner erkennen läßt. Von ihnen sind lediglich die Kirchenbauten zu unterscheiden, die mit einem guten Dutzend wieder eine beachtliche Dichte in der vergleichsweise kleinen Siedlung erreichen.⁵¹ Nur die wenigsten von ihnen waren frei zugänglich, wie die um St. Stephan gruppierte Kirchenfamilie am Nordrand der Siedlung, die als ein regionales Wallfahrtszentrum gedeutet wird.⁵² Die anderen Kirchen wie die Doppelkirche innerhalb der Mauern waren dagegen in die Wohnbebauung integriert und damit nur einem eingeschränkten Besucherkreis zugänglich.⁵³ Als Ausdruck eines privaten Stiftungswesens werden sie einzelnen Familien oder Clans angehört haben.⁵⁴

Das bereits eingangs erwähnte Mosaik aus der Stephanskirche zeigt wie sein Vorbild aus dem sechsten Jahrhundert bis zu einem gewissen Grad realitätsbezogen die zweiteilige Anlage der Siedlung mit dem dicht bebauten Kastron und der unbefestigten Vorstadt.⁵⁵ Allerdings ist Kastron Mefaa in den Mosaiken als

⁴⁸ Beispielsweise ging Banning 1986 und 1987 von einem symbiotischen Austausch zwischen sesshaften und nomadisierenden Bevölkerungsteilen aus, während Parker 1987 dagegen ein Konfliktmodell vertrat und Mayerson 1989 versuchte, zwischen den gegensätzlichen Positionen zu vermitteln. Weitere Literatur bei Parker 2000. Ausgehend von den sufaitischen Graffiti behandelte MacDonald 1993 die Problematik in vorbyzantinischer Zeit.

⁴⁹ Piccirillo 1995; Baumann 1999, 29–39.

⁵⁰ Plan des dicht bebauten Kastrons bei Wirth 2000, Abb. 17.

⁵¹ Piccirillo 1993, 205–243; Schick 1995, 472–476; Baumann 1999, 40–182; Michel 2001, 379–418 Nr. 144–151.

⁵² Piccirillo/Alliata 1994.

⁵³ Bujard 1996; Michel 2001, 411–417 Nr. 150 a/b.

⁵⁴ So auch Baumann 1999, 38. Allgemein zum „Kirchenbauboom am Ende der Spätantike“ vgl. Jäggi/Meier 1997, die die im 6. Jh. stark anwachsende Zahl an Kirchenstiftungen wie etwa in Gerasa ebenfalls in einer privaten Motivation der Stifter begründet sehen. Städtebaulich hat sie jedenfalls eine Tendenz zur Desintegration und Quartiersbildung zur Folge, die wie im Fall von Umm al-Djimal das gesamte Siedlungsbild prägen kann.

⁵⁵ N. Duval, *Le rappresentazioni architettoniche*, in: Piccirillo/Alliata 1994, 165ff. mit dem Mosaik des 6. Jhs. in der Löwenkirche (Taf. 2) und der Kopie des 8. Jhs. in St. Stephan (Taf. 3).

stolze Stadt stilisiert und durch ein zentral in der Vorstadt aufgestelltes Säulenmonument ausgezeichnet, für das jeder archäologische Nachweis fehlt. Offensichtlich konnten Versatzstücke aus dem griechisch-römischen Städtebau noch im achten Jahrhundert zur Überhöhung in der bildlichen Selbstdarstellung verwendet werden, während realiter schon längst auf ihren Einsatz verzichtet wurde.⁵⁶

Umm ar-Rasas ist mit Khirbet es-Samra und Umm al-Djermal kein isoliertes Phänomen, sondern steht für eine ganze Reihe von Siedlungen, in der eine indigene Familien- oder Clanstruktur vorherrschend war. Während auf der einen Seite im Auftrag des Kaisers oder des hohen Klerus noch im fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert Städte wie Zenobia, Resafa oder Abu Mena mit Säulenstraßen, Plätzen, Monumenten und öffentlichen Bauwerken angelegt wurden, hatte an der Peripherie – im Negev,⁵⁷ auf dem Sinai,⁵⁸ in Jordanien⁵⁹ und in Syrien⁶⁰ – bereits ein Wandel im Städtebau eingesetzt. Um ihn nicht als Niedergang abzuwerten, kann man ihn auch positiv als Emanzipation von der griechisch-römischen Kultur bezeichnen. Wolf LIEBESCHUETZ hatte sie in größerem Zusammenhang als lang anhaltende Entwicklung dargestellt, die unerwartet in der arabischen Eroberung des siebten Jahrhunderts gipfelte; diese kulturelle Emanzipation könne nach LIEBESCHUETZ zwar nicht den Zusammenbruch des Imperiums im Nahen Osten erklären, helfe aber zu verstehen, warum später keine Möglichkeit mehr bestand, die Provinzen dauerhaft zurückzuerobern.⁶¹ Aus archäologischer Sicht scheinen die Siedlungen in der Steppe den Epochenwandel auch ohne nennenswerte Zäsur überstanden zu haben, während die urbanen Lebensformen in den alten Städten allmählich verarmten und einer damit zusammenhängenden Ruralisierung weichen mußten.⁶²

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⁵⁶ Allgemein zu spätantiken Stadtdarstellungen vgl. Deckers 1989.

⁵⁷ Kritisch zum Forschungsstand Foss 1995.

⁵⁸ Zu Pharan im südlichen Sinai s. Grossmann 2002, 482–487 mit weiterer Literatur und Abb. 94.

⁵⁹ Neben den bereits erwähnten Ortschaften kann auch auf Humayma in SüdJordanien verwiesen werden: Oleson 1999.

⁶⁰ S. die Luftaufnahmen spätantiker Siedlungen in der syrischen Steppe bei Poidebard 1934; Mousterde/Poidebard 1945; Nordigulian/Salles 2000.

⁶¹ Liebeschuetz 2001, 317.

⁶² Kennedy 1985, 27; Foss 1997, 258–268.

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The Late Antique to Early Byzantine City in Southwest Anatolia. Sagalassos and its Territory: A Case Study

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Introduction (M. WAELEKENS)

During the last decade, the transition from the late antique to the early medieval Byzantine city has become a 'hot topic' among historians and archaeologists, who had previously neglected this period for the most part. In many excavations, these later levels were simply removed to quickly reach those from 'more interesting' periods (Whitley 2001, 14). The recent emergence of this topic has been largely confined to Anglo-Saxon academic literature. Within this literature, many scholars vehemently oppose the notion of 'decline' (for an overview, see Liebeschuetz 2001, 235; Cameron 2003). The discussion encompasses a number of important topics in addition to this recurrent theme.

One discussion focuses on the exact terminology proper to describe the changes which characterised this transitional period. A first group of academics strongly opposes the use of the word 'decline' (see Cameron 1993 and 2003). In *AV*, CAMERON's view, this term is far too emotive to be useful in the context of the late Roman situation, and is also too much affected by modern political concepts. CAMERON therefore supports M. WHITTOW, who pleads the case of continuity, drawing on material from the eastern part of the Empire. According to him, 'decline' has only been an 'ideological' model which is no longer necessary. Although he accepts that the 7th and 8th centuries saw a significantly 'poorer' world than the first two centuries of the Empire, he believes that the intervening period, from the 3rd to the 6th century, should be studied on its own terms, and that the word 'decline' can therefore no longer be sustained (Whittow 2001, 137). Academics who are aligned with this view explain what occurred in late antiquity either as 'accommodation', meaning that the end of Roman political power was essentially peaceful and untraumatic; or as 'transformation', postulating that the

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developments in the urban society during the 5th to 7th century reflect meaningful 'changes' rather than 'decline'. WHITTOW thus interprets the disappearance of the *curiales* not as a disaster for the provincial cities, but as a reflection of changed political circumstances in which the urban elites of the late Roman city were replaced by the bishop, the clergy and a group of landowners, all coming from the same social background. Furthermore, in WHITTOW's view, traditional patterns of municipal life survived this change, albeit in a new, Christian guise (Whittow 1996).

Opponents to this theory, however, consider the transition from late Roman to early Byzantine times as a period of 'decline' (e.g. Jones 1964 and 1966). For them, this transition was essentially a 'bad thing', a slow death of the cultural and political traditions which sustained the classical city. According to W. LIEBESCHUETZ, the changes characterising the transition to the late Roman city can be summarized as the expansion of the religious sphere at the expense of the secular, the end of a long political tradition and the pattern of urban design related to it, the abandonment of a particular ideal of what the good urban way of life represented, often occurring at the same time as a decrease of the population of particular cities, and a collapse of imperial and economic structures. For him, such changes can only be described as 'decline', even though these events did not occur everywhere simultaneously (Liebeschuetz 2001, 414).

Between these views, some authors have tried to take an intermediate stand. L. LAVAN, for instance, proposes that the term 'cultural relativism' better suits the developments in the 4th-5/6th centuries, while 'decline' may be applied to the situation of the 6th and 7th centuries (Lavan 2003a-b). Importantly, LAVAN also identifies regional diversities rather than a generalized, empire-wide decline as characteristic for the end of antiquity, an assumption that we support as well. As far as spatial function is concerned, he now accepts more continuity with the Roman past, counterbalancing the Christianisation of the cities. In his view, Roman civic monumentality was maintained up to the early 5th century, when an increasing Christianisation of urban space became visible. From the mid-5th century onward, civic political buildings were first neglected and then redeveloped, but non-political secular structures, such as baths and street monuments, seem to have remained important up to the 7th century (Lavan 2003b, 332).

A second discussion concerns the chronology. W. LIEBESCHUETZ dates the 'markers of decline', i.e. the end of the rule of the *decuriones*, the decline of monumental centres, the introduction of timber construction, the decrease of urban populations and of urban literacy as reflected in inscriptions, as well as the expansion of the sphere of the religious at the expense of the secular, to a period before the fall of the West (5th century). According to B. WARD-PERKINS, the question of whether the decline occurred before or after 400 AD in the West and 600 AD in the East, is still very much a matter of debate (Ward-Perkins 1996). The argument of C. Foss was that a substantive transformation of urban life in Asia Minor only took place after 600, not before (Foss 1975 a-b; 1977a-b; 1979; cf. also Whittow 1996). On the whole, the disappearance of the classical city in the 7th century is now commonly accepted, except by G. OSTROGORSKY, who

believed in the continuity of most episcopal seats as real instead of titular seats (for the last view, see Mitchell 2000). In his view, the end of municipal government only occurred with the introduction of the *theme* system. He did accept, however, a 'ruralisation' of the towns during the late 8th and the 9th centuries (Ostrogorsky 1959, 57–66). In fact, in Syria and Jordan, where the class of *possessores* seems to have disappeared, there is some evidence for a certain triumph of the 'middle classes', which installed small farms with agricultural equipment in the houses of the former *possessores* during the 7th and 8th centuries AD (Sodini 2003). Recently, debate has focussed on the 6th century for the East, particularly on the years after AD 550. At present, one of the major problems of chronology is that terms such as 'late Roman' or 'early Byzantine' are not always expressed in well defined 'centuries'. As far as Sagalassos is concerned, we are working with a more detailed chronology based on locally produced pottery.

A third major point of discussion focuses on the causes for the disappearance of the classical city during the 7th century AD. A first theory is that of an 'assassination', whereby the Roman East was destroyed by the invasions of Persians and Arabs in the East and Avars in the West, aggravated by the usurpation of Phokas and the killing of the legitimate emperor Maurice (Foss 1975 a–b; 1977a; Howard-Johnston 1995; 1999; Whittow 1996, 96f.). Proponents of this view believe that material and economic evidence from the Eastern Empire prior to these wars indicates a period of prosperity. Other scholars, however, attribute a more decisive role to 'natural causes' and a decline in basic institutions which began before the wars with the Arabs and the Persians started. LIEBESCHUETZ stresses the fact that municipal institutions already began to decay long before the 7th century. He mentions the change from government by *curiales* bound by constitutional rules to one dominated by notables who did not owe responsibility to anyone and who governed the cities from palatial mansions as a major transformation (Liebeschuetz 1996, 163, 169f.).

Eventually, the centuries-old social obligations of municipal *euergetai*, expressed in political terms, were replaced by acts of Christian charity (Liebeschuetz 2001, 401). In M. Whittow's view, notables came to display their wealth by building churches, monasteries, hospitals, orphanages and 'old people's homes', and these buildings reflected late Roman urban prosperity (Whittow 1990, 18). According to LIEBESCHUETZ, however, political attachment to the city declined, and notables no longer felt a moral obligation to maintain the infrastructure and appearance of their cities, but were more concerned about displaying their private wealth (through their estates and palaces) and imperial titles. As a consequence, political allegiance to factions arose, leading to riots under the cover of religious or factional rivalry (Liebeschuetz 2001, 237, 406). Whittow, on the other hand, maintains that from the 5th to the early 7th century, despite Christianisation, there was a fundamental continuity in the role of the cities and of their elites, as the ruling trinity of the late Roman city, composed of bishop, clergy and landowners, originated from the same social background as the mid-imperial *curiales*. The disappearance of the *curiales* was therefore no disaster (Whittow 1990, 28–30). In the view of J. HALDON and AV. CAMERON, political and economic collapse in the

7th century could only have resulted from a variety of fundamental structural changes (Haldon 1990, 9–40, 92–99; Cameron 1993, 152–175).

The Cities of Asia Minor: General Urban Developments and Changing Municipal Rule

M. WHITTOW has rightly observed that if the decades after 550 witnessed decisive changes, they ought to be visible in the cities of Asia Minor where a large number of medium to large sized towns have been excavated, many of which were early centres of Christianity (Whittow 2001, 138). In the 1970s C. Foss, basing his arguments on the archaeological evidence then available, came to the conclusion that a 'decline' of urban life in Asia Minor took place only during the 7th century, and was the result of Persian and Arab invasions (cf. above). In his opinion, it was not foreshadowed by events of the second half of the 6th century. WHITTOW (1990, 13–15) also points to growing evidence of continuing prosperity and major building activities during the 2nd half of the 6th century, especially in Jordan, Palestine and to some extent in Asia Minor (at Ephesos, Miletos, Sardis and Anemourion). Instead of secular structures, the rich people of the 6th century invested their wealth in the construction of churches, monasteries etc. In his view, the decline of the *curiales* in late antiquity merely reflected an institutional rearrangement, resulting from the increasingly difficult financial situations in which cities found themselves by the late 3rd and 4th centuries. A stream of imperial legislation to safeguard the position of the *curiales*, who became minor but still necessary officials, eventually failed, and after AD 550 the *curiales* disappeared completely. Contrary to the position of W. LIEBESCHÜETZ, WHITTOW does not believe that this 'ruined' the cities (Whittow 1990, 5–12). In his view, towns should not be treated as the only barometers of a society's prosperity. Recently WHITTOW has restudied the archaeological evidence from the cities already treated by Foss. He comes to the conclusion that prosperity as visible in the numismatic and ceramic evidence was maintained as late as the early 7th century. He also stresses that the disappearance of inscriptions after AD 550 is questionable and in some cases even contradicted (e.g. in Ephesos, where they continue into the early 7th century). That their numbers declined could correspond with a change in fashion, as many of them reflect a different content from those erected earlier (Whittow 1990, 21). He even suggests that inscriptions carved in stone could have been replaced by painted inscriptions, wall paintings and silver artefacts as media of elite display (Whittow 2001, 140–148). His archaeological evidence does confirm the partition of grand houses into workshops and poor dwellings during the 6th century, but he maintains that this may have been exceptional or that the elite may have retired to the countryside. For the period after AD 550, he does not yet accept a general decline, but only an urban recession brought about by the plague and other causes. He considers this not as a prelude to 'collapse', but as a process of 'adjustment', carried out while the economy was still fundamentally prosperous. He is convinced that without the

wars and invasions which began in the early 7th century, western Asia Minor could have recovered and reached the prosperity of contemporaneous Egypt or Iraq (Whittow 2001, 140–151). Still, he insists on the need for new rural surveys to establish whether or not the urban 'recession' of the 2nd half of the 6th century was matched by rural prosperity, as seems to have been the case in Lycia and Syria (Foss 1994; Whittow 2001, 152; Whittow 2003).

W. BRANDES and J. HALDON have also proposed that the decay of the *curiales* during the 5th–6th centuries does not amount to the disappearance of a civic ruling class, but that the members of this class freed themselves from state obligations without losing their local power. During the later 6th and early 7th centuries, this new elite class ruled the cities in cooperation with the bishop (Brandes/Haldon 2000, 156f.). LIEBESCHUETZ (1996) defends a tempered approach, although he still defines these events as 'decline'. To some extent, this is reflected in the epigraphical record. The steep decline in epigraphic commemoration around the middle of the 3rd century, coupled with the fact that in many places the last emperors to be honored were Constantine or even Diocletian and his colleagues, are explained by him as a reflection of the decline of the city as a political community (Liebeschuetz 1996, 162f.). But although the number of inscriptions decreased overall in late antiquity, this decline was not a universal phenomenon. As for local government, the disappearance of the *boule* under Anastasius was probably not a complete abolishment, but a removal of its members' collective responsibility for urban administration and the collection of imperial taxes. On the other hand, members of the *boule* retained the hereditary liability to perform certain *munera* of an unpleasant and expensive kind. As far as imperial legislation is concerned, LIEBESCHUETZ sees a sharp decline in the period after AD 550, corresponding to the disappearance of the old *curiales* (Liebeschuetz 1996, 170).

In his recent book, LIEBESCHUETZ identifies the first thirty years of the 6th century as a period of high activity in the East, and concludes that real disaster would have struck Asia Minor only during the second half of the 7th century (Liebeschuetz 2001, 415). Yet, in his eyes, this disaster was foreshadowed by a 'disintegration' of traditional structures and the splitting up of the urban populations into (political or religious) factions. This resulted from the fact that the cities were now ruled by a new elite which did not feel the same obligations toward their hometowns as the *curiales* had done before. Although there was an element of continuity, in that the new municipal power still lay in the hands of landed oligarchs, responsibility was now taken by a vaguely defined, self-appointed group of magistrates who made decisions for the city and nominated its officials in the privacy of the audience halls of their grand houses (Liebeschuetz 2001, 405). As these developments made cities less capable of providing the services that the imperial government required, the latter was forced to find other instruments for attaining its administrative needs, and came to rely on provincial or regional aristocracies that were rewarded with the right to nominate the governors of their own province (Liebeschuetz 2001, 407–408). The rule of this new nobility was formally recognized by the legislation of Anastasius and Justinian. Under these conditions the political power of the bishop need not have been

actively sought by the Church, but would have arisen to fill the power vacuum created after the weakening of the city's secular government (Liebeschuetz 2001, 401). As a result of all these developments, the city as a corporate body came to an end before the Islamic invasions. LIEBESCHUETZ concludes that urban 'decline' set in around the middle of the 6th century or even earlier, and, possibly as the result of the plague of 541/42, a significant number of cities began to decline in population. During the later part of his reign, Justinian therefore faced difficulties in raising adequate armies (Liebeschuetz 2001, 408).

The Development of Specific Building Types in Late Antique Cities

Buildings for leisure

Buildings affiliated with public entertainments, such as baths and theatres, were heavily criticised by the Church, but with varying effects. Large public baths and theatres do not seem to have disappeared before the middle of the 6th century AD (Mango 1981, Ellis 1988, 566). The games were organised as long as they remained instruments for producing support for an aspiring emperor, and also served as an opportunity to voice popular grievances. Through allegiance to factions, these *acclamations* gave the people a limited, but nevertheless significant, power. In fact, the organisation of theatrical performances and chariot races came to be carried out by the factions themselves, which derived most of their income from taxation (Liebeschuetz 1996, 179–182; Liebeschuetz 2001, 401).

Housing

In Anatolia this topic is unfortunately still largely neglected, except at Pergamon (Rheidt 1991). According to S. ELLIS, during the 4th century an increasing number of rich houses and public buildings were abandoned. However, from the later 4th century onward, the largest houses became more elaborate, containing many specialised reception rooms that reflected the concentration of economic and political power in fewer hands, and the creation of more autocratic and ceremonious forms of patronage. From this period onward political business came more and more to be conducted within these aristocratic dwellings (Ellis 1988, 569–576). In ELLIS' view, however, new peristyle houses were not built after AD 550, reflecting the end of the ancient way of life (Ellis 1988, 565). Av. CAMERON points out that the subdivision of former grand houses into smaller rooms, creating multiple dwellings, had become a widespread phenomenon in the East, especially during the later 6th and 7th centuries AD (Cameron 1993, 160f.). H. SARADI stresses that this subdivision of larger houses was not a result of a sudden breakdown of social structures at the end of the early Byzantine period, but a reflection of the slow process of change that started during the 4th century. She agrees that the building of new peristyle houses came to an end around AD 550, and that the surviving houses were subdivided into smaller units in order to offer dwelling space to more families, which was often accompanied by the instalment

of agricultural workspaces and workshops. She does not exclude the possibility, however, that some of these large mansions were altered by the owners themselves, who now occupied only part of the house, and rented the rest to tenants. These occupants should not, therefore, be regarded as squatters (Saradi 1998, 21–23, 36, 43). M. WHITTOW recognizes the subdivision and more modest character of houses during the 6th century, but argues that it is possible that only ‘exceptions’ have been identified by contemporary scholars (Whittow 2001, 140–151, 162). Yet the evidence he cites is sometimes debatable. For instance, a recent (re)study of both Terrace Houses at Ephesos showed that even in the same neighbourhood quite contrasting situations could coexist. Whereas ‘Hanghaus 2’ seems to have been destroyed in 250–75 AD and not repaired prior to the installation of workshops in it during the 7th century, ‘Hanghaus 1’ was rebuilt after various earthquakes, although from the later 4th/early 5th century onward this rebuilding was accompanied by subdivision into smaller housing and workshops units. By AD 550, the whole area had become a decayed block of poor houses and craft activity (Ladstätter 2002).

Encroachment upon Public Space

In some cities, ‘encroachment’ of this kind began early, probably as the result of warfare (e.g. at Anemourion after the Persian invasion of the 3rd century). In Ephesos and elsewhere (Kyrene, Salona), parts of the public squares, which had for long been centres of public life, were filled with small houses in the course of the 4th century (Ellis 1988, 566; Saradi 1994; Saradi 1998, 17–20). As ELLIS and H. SARADI have pointed out, a number of Theodosian and other late Imperial edicts were designed to maintain the façades of major public monuments in order to preserve the cultural heritage of the cities, but they did not prevent subdivisions of the interior of public monuments or grand houses. This phenomenon, which increased during the 5th and 6th centuries as a result of declining urban revenues, could have been advantageous to rich city dwellers who bought the structures and made them profitable by renting them to their clientele. The same could be true for civic authorities who turned empty urban space and decaying public buildings into profitable properties by renting them to merchants and artisans. (Ellis 1988, 566f.; Saradi 1998, 17–20). In other cities, encroachment upon the sites of former public buildings is attributed to the later 6th and 7th centuries AD, and was, according to AV. CAMERON, a widespread phenomenon caused not by specific events such as the plague or invasions, but by more generalized administrative and economic factors, particularly the changing relationship of provincial cities to the central administrative organization (Cameron 1993, 160–162). In SARADI’s view, only at the very end of the early Byzantine period did the wealthy owners of urban properties flee, and their possessions come to be occupied by peasants or invaders (Saradi 1998, 20). Again LIEBESCHUETZ offers a slightly different interpretation: he asserts that the new oligarchic elites in the cities no longer took any responsibility for the maintenance of the physical structure of the towns, nor for the well-being of their inhabitants. This eventually led to the disintegration of the city as a corporate body, and radical

changes in its physical appearance (Liebeschuetz 2001, 406). WHITTOW acknowledges the fact that by the 7th century the regular grid plans of the cities were transformed into networks of narrow alleys, but in his view the presence of ruins in the towns of the 6th century AD was perfectly compatible with pride in a wealthy and well-maintained city, as public ceremonies in the open air were replaced by ceremonies in the cathedral and other churches (Whittow 1990, 19).

The Economy of Late Antique Cities in the East

W. BRANDES and J. HALDON acknowledge that some urban centres may have been reduced in size by the plague, or relocated to more defensible sites in response to growing insecurity. But they also stress that both literary and archaeological evidence from Asia Minor suggests that in most cases urban centres continued to fulfil their role as local foci of exchange, small scale commodity production, and social activity for wealthy landowners, at least until the 620s. In their eyes, the abandonment, shrinkage or displacement of many cities in Asia Minor occurred from the 640s onwards as a result of invasions and raids. In this period the state seems to have transferred its attention to village communities, which became the main unit of fiscal assessment during the second half of the 7th century, leading to the 'ruralisation' of Byzantine society (Brandes/Haldon 2000, 147–150, 171).

As far as coinage is concerned, M. WHITTOW recognizes that low-value copper and bronze coins became extremely rare during the 7th and 8th centuries, but argues that this was already not the case in the 6th century (Whittow 2001, 139). G. OSTROGORSKY had accepted a serious curtailment of bronze coinage, starting in the middle of the 7th century, but had argued that the basic gold coinage did not diminish, but actually increased during that century (Ostrogorsky 1959, 50–52). According to J. BANAJI (2001), it was exactly the emergence of gold as a stable, high value coinage which revolutionized the economic conditions of the later empire. This thesis would explain the remarkable prosperity of the countryside in late antiquity, certainly lasting into the 6th century. W. LIEBESCHUETZ, however, does not accept the argument that economic activity at a high level was maintained over the whole area right up to the disasters of the early 7th century. He correctly emphasises the many local and regional differences. In his view, there is no doubt that the empire suffered simultaneously from famine, possibly caused by climatic change, and the recurrent plague in the 540s, resulting in an economic 'decline' that stopped large scale building in many of the cities of Asia Minor (Liebeschuetz 2001, 408–410).

On the other hand, WHITTOW still continues to maintain that the centuries-old tradition of manufacturing distinctive 'Roman' pottery types based on a relatively small number of larger-scale manufacturing sites came to an end only in the 7th century. This conclusion may be applied to local productions as well. And imports of late Roman fine wares still reached Sardis during the early 7th century (Whittow 2001, 139, 141, 147). As has recently been shown by S. KINGSLEY, the large-scale trade in Palestinian wine, documented by the distribution of Palestin-

ian amphorae from Gaza/Ashkelon, only took off in the early 5th century and lasted for about 250 years. Palestinian wine-growing farmers certainly acted in response to not only fiscal demands, but also to commercial forces. KINGSLEY calls for additional rural surveys in the East, together with the excavation of artisanal quarters and intensive fieldwork within the cities proper (Kingsley 2003, 130–133). Both approaches are pursued at Sagalassos.

The Countryside

W. LIEBESCHUETZ argues that, generally speaking, villages and cities flourished and declined together, although he allows for the possibility that large villages and monasteries may have drawn wealth and power from the towns to the countryside. Indeed, he recognizes that in the East imperial authorities eventually ceased to rely on cities for collecting taxes (Liebeschuetz 2001, 409, 411). Eventually, this led to a complete change in relationship between the cities and their surrounding territory, as the cities lost their former rural possessions. The final result seems again to have been that in some areas deurbanisation started as early as the middle of the 6th century, while in other regions cities continued to flourish into the first half of the 7th century (Brandes/Haldon, 141–145).

In his study of the Anatolian countryside, which primarily focussed on Galatia and Cappadocia, F. TROMBLEY stresses that in the 5th to 6th centuries the city dominated its territory physically, politically, economically and culturally. Yet the villages survived the catastrophes of the 7th century much better because they were less vulnerable than the cities. They had also established direct links with alternative structures from the 6th century AD onward, such as the armies, which bypassed traditional centres (Trombley 2001). The changes in coinage and taxation described by J. BANAJI substantially altered the role of the countryside. The dominant agrarian class seems to have been able to draw on the 'surplus' rural population, leading to the remarkable prosperity of the late Roman countryside. Starting in the 4th and culminating in the 6th century, the countryside would have absorbed a great deal of investment by the elites (Banaji 2001, 213–219).

Recently M. WHITTOW (2001) has correctly stressed, as P. HORDEN and N. PURCELL had before him (Horden/Purcell 2000, 96–101), that cities and villages, town and countryside should not be seen as different categories of space, but rather as different points on a continuum of settlement (Whittow 2001, 151). In Asia Minor in particular, our knowledge is very fragmentary, save for recent work by F. KOLB and C. FOSS in Lycia, and that of our team at Sagalassos. KOLB's surveys at Kyaneai have shown that city and countryside alike flourished during the 6th century, with church building occurring in both contexts. In this period there certainly was no flight of the municipal elite to the countryside. Rural settlements around Kyaneai seem to have remained occupied until the middle Byzantine period. Already in late antiquity some fortified Hellenistic 'Turngehöfte' had been reoccupied and became the nuclei of later settlements (Kolb 1993, 3; 1995, 9; 1996, 5f.; Thomsen 1993, 45–49; 1995, 57; 1996, 81). Foss'

recent research in Lycia confirms the picture of continuous prosperity in late antiquity, culminating in the 6th century. Cities maintained their previous area and buildings, new coastal settlements emerged and churches and monasteries were established in the countryside. Foss even compares the prosperity of late antique Lycia to that of the limestone plateau villages of northern Syria and the villages in Cilicia. By the 7th century, however, decline set in, most of the undefended coastal settlements were abandoned, and cities contracted in size in order to become fortified centres. Foss therefore refers to the 7th and later centuries as 'Dark Ages' (Foss 1994).

The Christianisation of the Cities

K. HARL distinguishes three phases in the Christianisation of sacred places within and around the cities of Asia Minor. In the initial phase (mid 4th – early 5th century AD), Roman Imperial authorities and bishops alike cautiously cooperated in constructing the first basilicas, which were often located in sites that encroached upon pagan public areas. The basilicas were also intended to draw crowds away from well known pagan shrines, because Christianity was still a minority faith in many cities. During the second phase (5th century AD), the clergy and Christian *curiales* expanded and articulated places of Christian worship. Inside the city temples were converted into churches or destroyed. Finally, during the last phase (from the reign of Justinian onward), the construction of magnificently domed cathedrals modelled after those of Constantinople was undertaken (Hall 2001, 305–315).

The State of the Debate on Late Antique Cities in the East

This brief review of current research has shown that the great majority of scholars does agree that urban civilisation declined in one way or another in the course of the 7th century. On the other hand, there is no agreement on the question whether the period from ca. 550 to 600 AD actually was the crucial phase within this process of decline. Moreover, there are a variety of opposing theories concerning the character of the transitional phenomena that could have constituted 'decline'. Attention is therefore currently focused on the events of the middle of the 6th century (Whittow 2001, 137).

In order to address the problems of this period, one must be aware that a great deal of regional variety existed, and that there is an urgent need to excavate late antique and early Byzantine strata over larger areas in urban sites, as well as to combine data obtained from these excavations with others gained from intensive urban surveys. In order to draw well-balanced conclusions, city and countryside should be studied together (cf. Whittow 2001, 151f.).

A Case Study: Sagalassos and its Territory

Originally, this article was intended to investigate Southwest Anatolia as a whole, but the nature of the evidence is at the same time too diverse and too sparse to do so; and the differences in quality and methodology between excavations are too extreme to draw valid conclusions. Furthermore, a recent study of Pisidia in early and middle Imperial times has indicated that huge differences existed in the degree of Romanisation between the cities of this region (Waelkens 2002). This was continued in late antiquity, when well-protected places like Kremna (Mitchell 1995, 219–232) and Selge became important centres of Christianity and attracted new population, whereas other sites were diminished or even declined. Selge, for example, the major site of Pisidia in the Hellenistic period, fell into oblivion in early and middle Imperial times, but saw a second period of importance and growth from the mid 7th until the 9th century (Nollé/Schindler 1991, 15).

The fate of a site was thus closely linked to constantly changing and highly localised military and political events. A case in point is the fate of Side in Pamphylia: according to J. NOLLÉ, the city flourished during the 3rd century as an 'Etappenstadt' and centre of the Roman fleet in the East. Then, during the first half of the 4th century, it underwent a period of decline, but eventually recovered completely and flourished until the end of the 5th century. Its situation during the 6th century is still largely unknown, but during the next two centuries the site became much smaller (Nollé 1993, 81, 94, 135, 140–142).

For the reasons outlined above, we decided to concentrate on Sagalassos and its territory in this paper. The city proper has been excavated since 1990, studied through intensive urban surveys since 1999 and through geophysical research since 2001. The territory of Sagalassos has been investigated through non-intensive surveys since 1993 and through intensive suburban surveys since 1999. Because of the wealth of information produced by this complementary research, it is now possible to draw some conclusions about developments at this specific site.

The chronological divisions discussed below are based on the locally produced *Sagalassos Red Slip Ware* (Poblome 1999; Vanhaverbeke/Waelkens 2003), which is ubiquitous at the site. The chronology of this ware is divided into 9 phases, the later part of which is subdivided into 'Middle Roman' (phase 5: ca. 200–300 AD), 'Late Roman' (phases 6–7: ca. 300–450/75 AD) and 'Early Byzantine' (phases 8–9: ca. 450/75–640/75 AD).

Sagalassos in the 3rd Century AD

Urbanism (F. MARTENS)

During the first three centuries of imperial rule, Sagalassos almost tripled in size from its Hellenistic extent of 12.8 ha [Fig. 1]. The Hellenistic city was located inside the probably late 3rd century BC walls (Waelkens 2004, 460). In Julio-

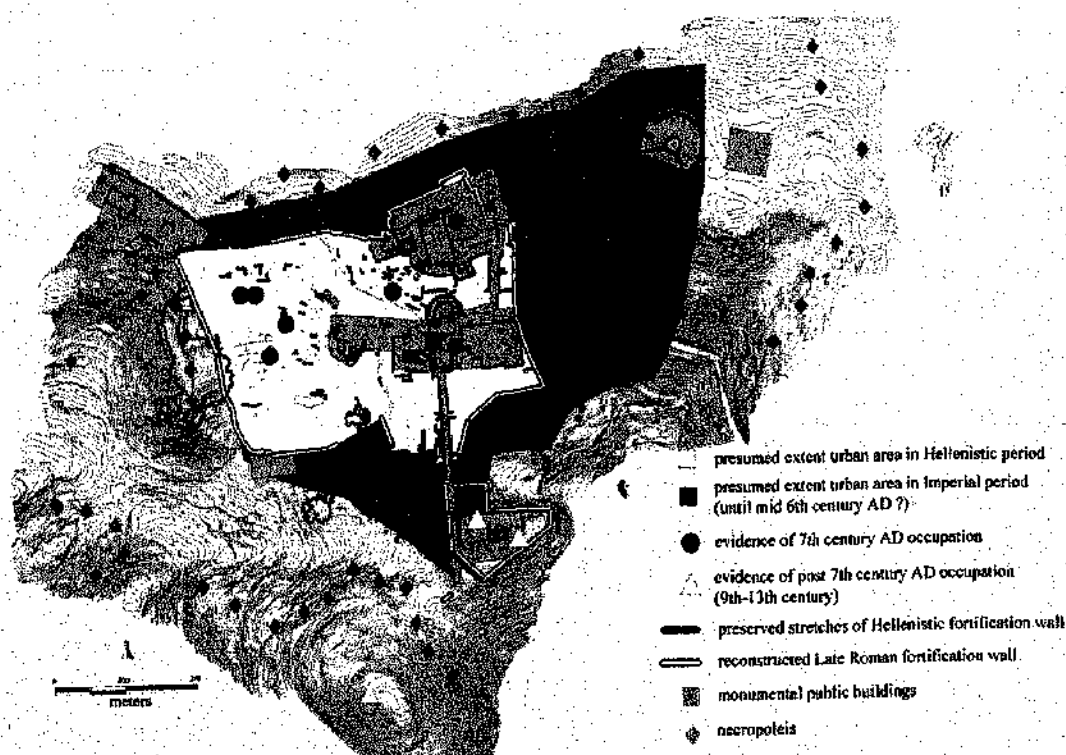


Fig. 1: Map of the occupation of Sagalassos based on intensive urban survey (F. Martens).

Claudian times, the city expanded far beyond these fortifications, first in an eastward direction and then toward the south. This extended area was surrounded by *necropoleis* in all directions, indicating that the borders of the urban site were clearly fixed. The eastern extension became the new residential area for the rich, while the old residential district in the western part of the city, located inside the Hellenistic walls, continued in its use. Of the ca. 31.5 hectares enclosed by the *necropoleis*, excluding the public squares and structures, an area of ca. 25.2 hectares was available for habitation or other urban functions, and this housed a population for which estimates run from 2,500 to 3,750 (Martens 2004).

By the 3rd century AD the urban plan of the monumental centre was complete, and after the first quarter of the century no further major building constructed with freshly quarried limestone blocks was erected at Sagalassos. All ashlar constructions erected after that time were composed of *spolia* (Loots 2001, 112–115) and tuffo. The absence of monumental construction at Sagalassos during the 3rd century should not be interpreted as a sign of decline resulting from instability caused by the incursions of the Goths during the third quarter of the century (Mitchell 1993, 235–236) or the attempt of Zenobia of Palmyra to expand her realm into Anatolia (Waelkens 2001, 76). It seems more likely that the urban fabric was saturated after the large-scale building programmes of the preceding two centuries and already contained the maximum of urban amenities that could be maintained in good working conditions (Vanhaverbeke/Waelkens 2003, 132).

The 3rd century town must have possessed a network of paved streets. In the mid-imperial period the main streets of this network had been monumentalized by the addition of colonnades. By this time the town also possessed a good water

distribution and drainage system. The *pax Romana* provided the conditions of peace and prosperity required for the construction of expensive aqueducts. The introduction of abundant water supplies was contemporaneous with the appearance of large water-consuming structures, such as baths and *nymphaea*. The construction of these utilitarian buildings became the main focus of investment by the urban elite during the 2nd and early 3rd century AD, until the saturation of the urban fabric in the 3rd century provoked a shift toward the financing of *agones* (Waelkens 2002).

Municipal Life (M. WAELKENS)

The leading class of Sagalassos had embraced the Roman cause much earlier than other Pisidian cities. As early as the reign of Augustus, the elite of Sagalassos embellished the city with structures inspired by those found in Italy, the provincial capitals and the Augustan colony of Pisidian Antioch. As a reward, the first Sagalassians became *cives Romani* during the reigns of Claudius and Nero, if not before. Roman knighthood was obtained by several families in Flavian times. The first Roman senators appeared toward the end of the 2nd century AD, and during the 3rd century AD several Sagalassians belonging to the equestrian or senatorial order became governors of their own province (Devijver 1996; Waelkens 2002, 342–344). The city abounded with honorific and other inscriptions. During the 3rd century, inscriptions honoured members of the local elite, victors of the *agones*, provincial governors as well as members of the imperial family, and these inscriptions testify to a thriving municipal life. Many inscribed sarcophagi and *arcosolia* may date from this period (Köse in press). The continuing prosperity of the city is also seen in the abundance of its 3rd century AD local coinage, which continued into the reign of Claudius II (Von Aulock 1977).

The Urban Economy (J. POBLOME)

Whereas in early and mid-imperial times Sagalassos was the metropolis of Pisidia, it gradually lost this position in the course of the 3rd century to other cities of southern Pisidia, which profited to a higher degree than Sagalassos from the business of delivering food and probably weapons to the Roman fleet stationed at Side (Mitchell 1999; Waelkens 2002). Yet during this time grain and olive production prospered at Sagalassos, and the potters' industry flourished as a result of the favourable economic developments in Pisidia at large. Unfortunately, no site apart from Sagalassos provides secure archaeological contexts for studying contemporary craft organization in the region. So far, only two 3rd century AD deposits have been located in the city. Both were in the local potters' quarter, and not in the town itself. 'Site F' was excavated in 1990–91 in the northern part of the quarter. At the foot of a terrace wall, a dump of misfired pottery was discovered, which is chronologically fairly homogeneous (Poblome 1999, 191–192, 254–255, 316). The second deposit was found during the 2001 campaign in a pottery workshop located in the middle of the eastern slope of the potters' quarter. The ceramic assemblage was dated to the 3rd century AD, and

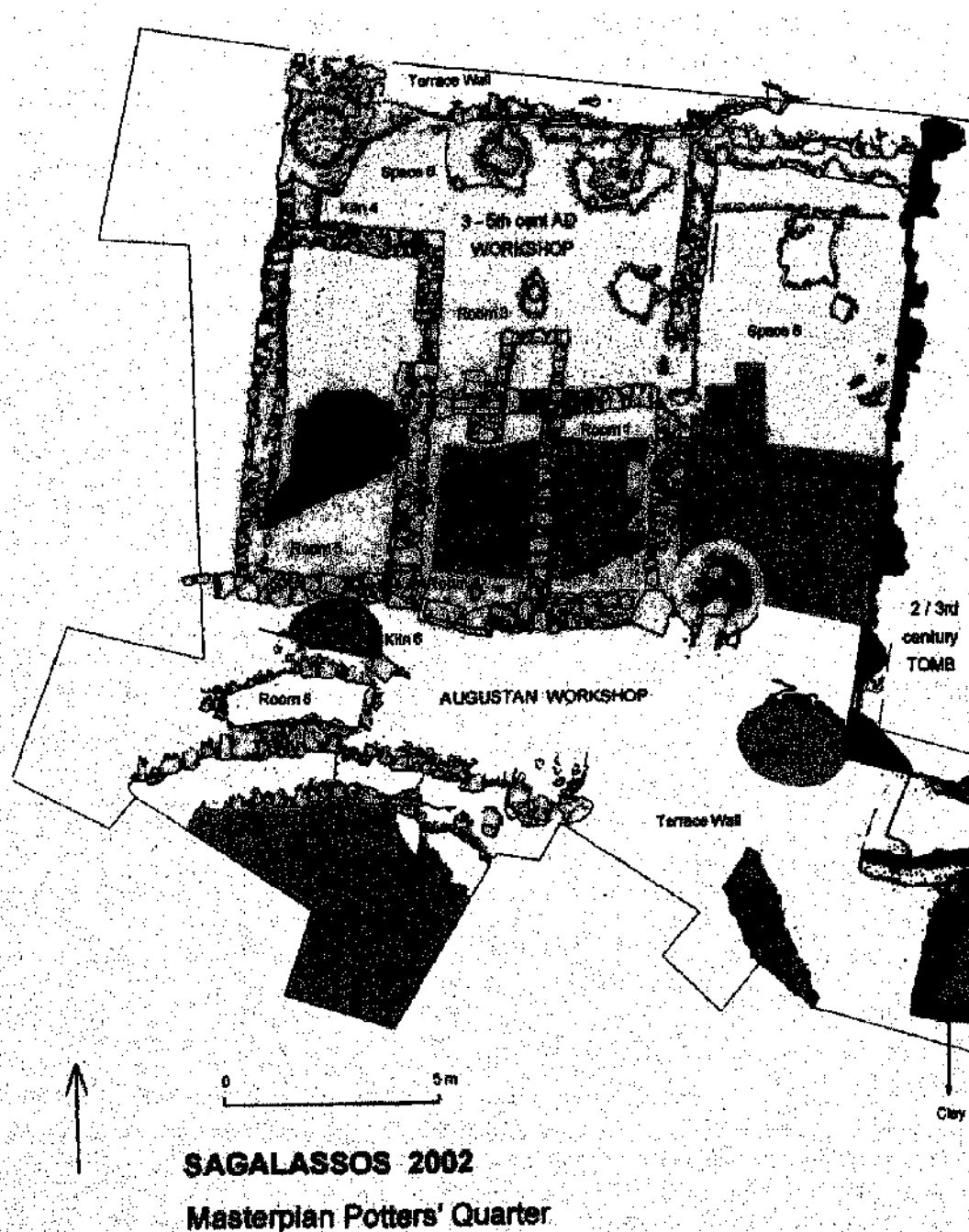


Fig. 2: Map of the excavated workshop in the potters' quarter: above the 3rd-5th century AD workshop with its kilns 2 and 4; below the Augustan workshop with the clay working unit and kilns 1, 3, 7 and 6 (which is a glass kiln). Kiln 2 perhaps dates to the 2nd century AD. To the right the 2nd/3rd century AD tomb (J. Poblome).

probably more specifically to its second half. The development of buildings detected at this site provides physical evidence of the continuity of the potter's craft at Sagalassos, with the late Roman workshop replacing an as yet unidentified earlier production unit. The late Roman workshop started producing pottery in the 3rd century AD (probably during its second half), and remained in use into the 5th century AD.

When comparing the two major phases of production, the structures on the eastern slope of the potters' quarter at Sagalassos provide evidence for continuity in the local organization of production. The potters first installed themselves in this area in early imperial times, and abandoned their workshops for the construction of a *naiskos*-tomb during the second half of the 2nd century AD. The potters then systematically re-installed themselves in the area when the tomb fell into ruins after being used about a century or less. The late Roman workshop was excavated in its entirety [Fig. 2]. It contained an entrance room (room 4), a pottery drying room (room 1), a storage room for clays and fired pottery (room 5), a working space (space 6) with up to three potter's wheels, two circular kilns (kilns 2 and 4) and various pottery dumps located in the immediate vicinity. The production facilities of the first phase are less systematically documented, as they were dismantled during the construction of the mid-imperial tomb and further damaged during the late Roman occupation of the area. However, it can be ascertained that they included clay pits, a facility for trampling the clay, and several kilns [see Fig. 2].

In general, taking into account the amount and quality of the ceramic output, both workshop phases can be regarded as having operated in a similar way as a manufactory. That means that producing pottery was life-sustaining and required the highest possible level of organisation and specialisation of the work process, resulting in a comparatively long training for the potters. The best available technological solutions were developed and standardisation of working processes as well as products were required. The products had to be of the highest possible quality, and responsive to the changing tastes of consumers (Peacock 1982). The remains of the structures so far exposed may seem modest for sustaining production at this level, but intensification of production in antiquity was typically achieved by multiplying small-scale production units instead of enlarging existing facilities (McCormick 2001, 58). The fact that both workshop phases were only dedicated to the production of table wares indicates that contemporaneous workshops for other products must have existed elsewhere. In 2003, a large additional workshop area containing at least 22 kilns or furnaces was identified through geophysical research to the north of the theatre. That both phases of production can be classified as a manufactory suggests that the model of production developed for early imperial eastern sigillata continued into late Roman times (Poblome/Brulet in press). This model implies that at least a certain sector of the local elite had special interests in large-scale craft production. The elite would have utilized parts of their land as clay quarries (Degryse et al. 2003c) to supply the large amounts of raw material necessary for the production of specific wares. If they also invested in the productive infrastructure, the local aristocrats could have controlled the means of production as well. And even the marketing of the products was for the most part not in the hand of the potters but in those of kiln-owners, who received most of the profit from the local and long distance exchange of the table wares manufactured under their control.

The potters, on the other hand, may have maintained their social visibility and economic interests through the organisation of professional associations or

guilds. Most testimonies about private associations in the East come from Asia Minor, where they are widely attested in the first half of the 3rd century AD. From the 4th century AD onward most such evidence comes from Egypt. A relatively small number of potters associations is known from the East, while evidence for a pottery trading organization is entirely lacking. In general, potters are mentioned simply as potters, without indication of professional specialization. Unfortunately, evidence for organisations such as those of Arezzo does not exist for the production centres of the eastern sigillata (Zimmermann 2002, 7–13, 154–158, 168–169).

Of importance in this context is not whether professional potters' associations continued into and beyond the 3rd century AD, which they certainly did, but whether or not they changed substantially in nature. Available late Roman evidence mostly documents the relationship between practitioners of the craft and central authorities, an aspect much less present in the earlier Imperial record. Questions arise as to whether this reflects changes in the nature of the evidence, or whether deeper functional changes in the structure of the associations took place (Zimmerman 2002, 183–190), with central authorities exercising stronger control in order to ensure that certain indispensable services were provided. To this end, professions were made hereditary, and fortunes tied to the associations. This would not have resulted from a general decree, but from specific regulations, varying according to different needs in the regions of the late Roman Empire (Weber 1993, 101–134). Papyrological evidence indicates that the central authorities were only involved in cases in which the services of the association were crucial to the functioning of the state, while other guilds enjoyed a relatively independent status (Fichman 1969). These guilds simply had to pay their taxes, perform certain communal tasks and services, and follow the price regulations of the local authorities. So in general governmental interest in craft production remained limited, and this sector continued to be dependent on members of the local elite who saw supporting crafts as an opportunity to make the most of their capital and properties (Garnsey/Whittaker 1998).

The case-study of Sagalassos thus highlights structural features of the local urban economy. Although a lot of important types of table ware were reduced to regional importance or disappeared from the market altogether during the 3rd century AD, *Sagalassos Red Slip Ware* was never able to fill the gap thus left in the Empire-wide market or to compete with *Eastern Sigillata C* and *African Red Slip Ware*. *Sagalassos Red Slip Ware* never achieved a very wide distribution, although important quantities of the ware have been identified at consumer sites connected with the long-distance trade network [Fig. 3]. Ongoing non-intensive survey campaigns in the territory of the ancient town and occasional visits to sites in the wider region of Pisidia have made clear, however, that Sagalassos table ware enjoyed a regional monopoly throughout its existence. Considering the density of occupation in Roman and late Roman times (Vanhaverbeke/Waelkens 2003, 241–282) and the high number of urban settlements within Pisidia (Brandt 1992), there apparently was a large enough market to sustain the mass production of *Sagalassos Red Slip Ware* for a very long time.

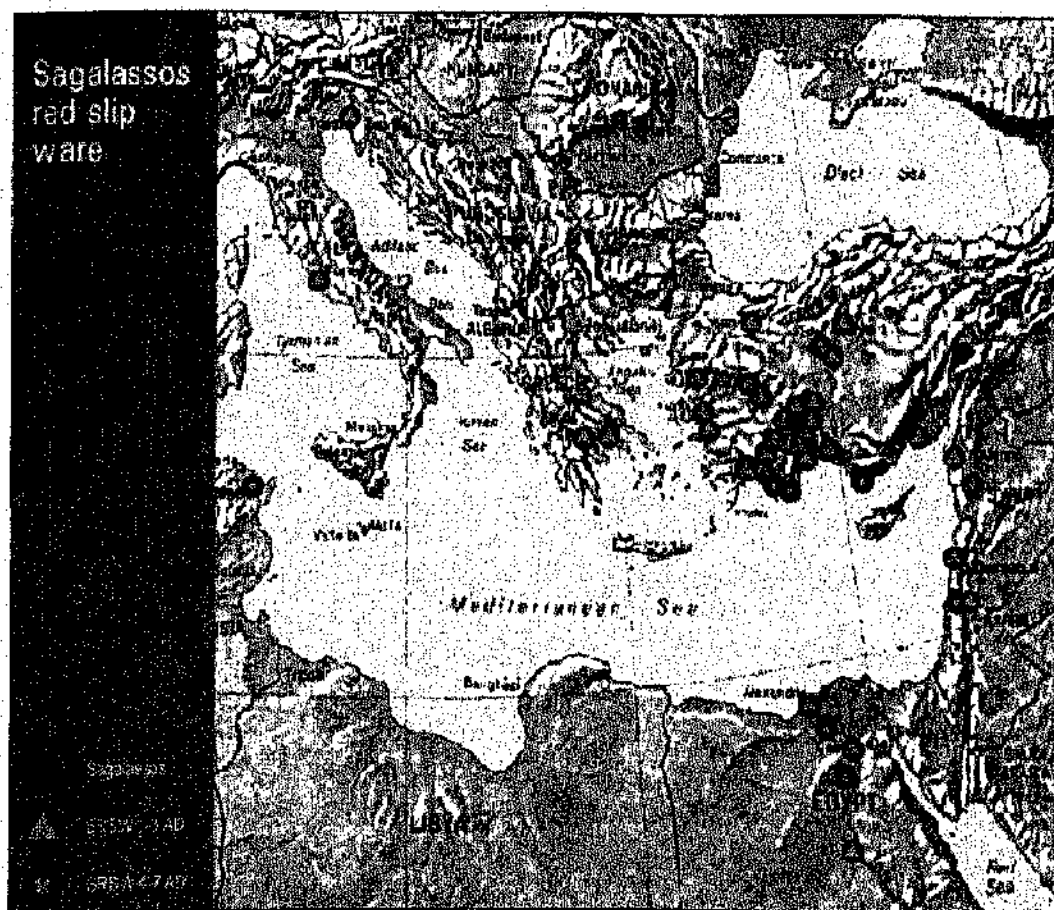


Fig. 3: Distribution map of the *Sagalassos Red Slip Ware* during the 1st–3rd centuries and the 4th–7th centuries AD (J. Poblome).

On the other hand, Sagalassos was not Pergamon or Ephesos. The leading citizens of Sagalassos were certainly wealthy enough to turn their town into one of the marvels of the Taurus mountains, but they never managed to elevate their town beyond the economic status of provincial *primus inter pares*. In much the same way, the potters of Sagalassos created high quality table ware comparable in technique and style to the better products of eastern sigillata, but the distribution of their wares remained largely restricted to Pisidia.

The Suburban Area and the Countryside (H. VANHAVERBEKE)

In the early and middle imperial periods, the suburban area [Fig. 4] had a markedly residential character. The upper slopes, unsuitable for cultivation or habitation, were used for monumental tombs. The middle slopes were the primary site of occupation by the elite, as several suburban villas attest. Fragments of olive presses and traces of ancient manure on pottery sherds, in combination with the retention of open ground in the suburban area, suggest the presence of olive yards and intensively cultivated gardens or orchards. Pollen retrieved from a sample at the potters' quarter point to the cultivation of vines and walnuts in close

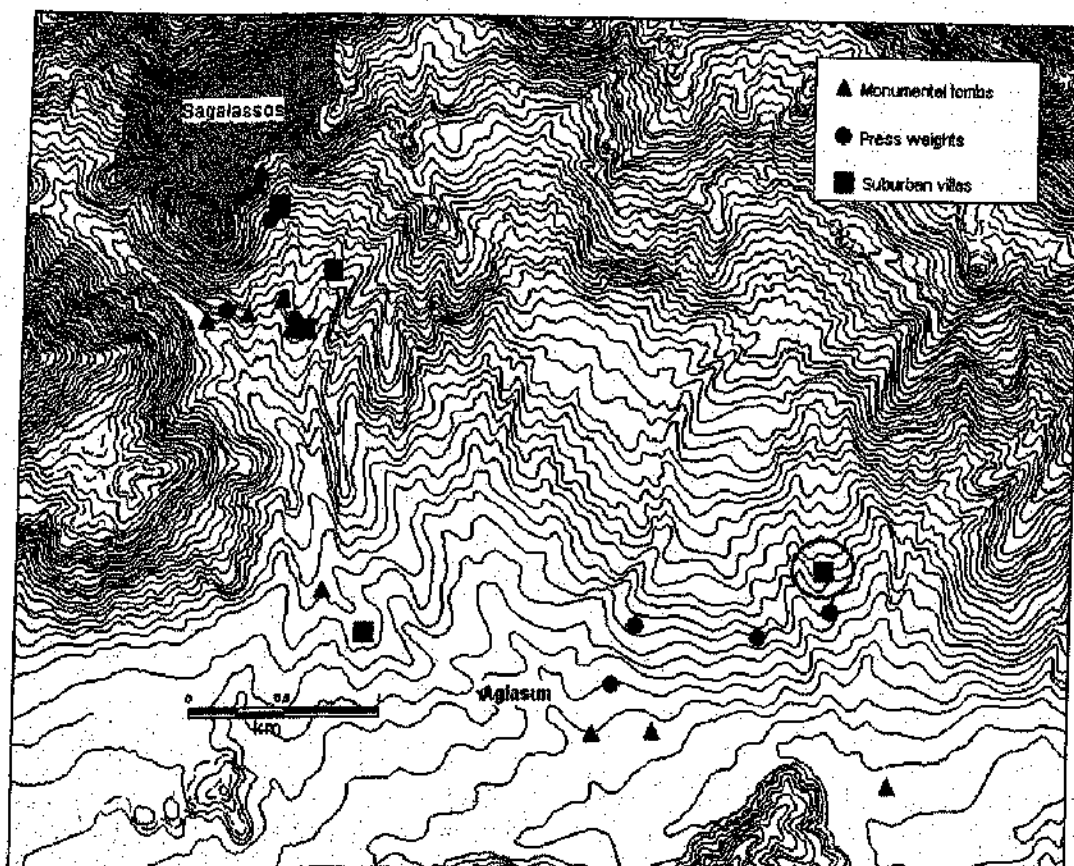


Fig. 4: The landuse in the suburbs of Sagalassos during the first three centuries AD (H. Vanhaverbeke).

proximity to the city in imperial times (Vanhaverbeke/Waelkens 2003, 256; Vanhaverbeke et al. 2004 and in press b; Vermoere 2004). This picture seems not to have changed while the city flourished during the 3rd century AD and provided the Roman troops stationed in Pamphylia with foodstuff and other materials.

Due to the *pax Romana* the first three centuries AD saw an economic boom in Pisidia. The influx of thousands of Augustan colonists in the area and the installation of an excellent road network, including the via Sebaste, controlled for over 42 miles by Sagalassos, created a large market. The territory of Sagalassos, extending over 1.800 sq. kil. [Fig. 5], was occupied by numerous sites, ranging from large, wealthy villages to isolated farmsteads and monumental tombs. The tombs attest the presence of a landholding elite in the countryside, who ensured the durability of the links between city and territory. The economy of the countryside was fully market-oriented. This is indicated by the production of cash crops such as grain and olives, which according to palynological research reached its peak in imperial times, and by the fact that the larger villages were situated along routes which guaranteed direct access to Sagalassos (Vanhaverbeke/Waelkens 2003).



Fig. 5: Settlement patterns in the wider territory of Sagalassos during the first three centuries AD (H. Vanhaverbeke).

Conclusion (M. WAELEKENS)

The evidence discussed here shows that Sagalassos was a prosperous town during the 3rd century AD, although it may have gradually lost its exceptional position within Pisidia. The city possessed all the urban amenities of a wealthy provincial town and was the site of an active municipal life. This is seen in the continuous minting of local coinage, the erection of honorific inscriptions and the popularity of *agones*. Farming activities, most importantly the growing of grain and olives, were carried out by estates and villages in the city's territory, and the growth of olives also in suburban villas. Landowners must have profited from the stationing of large numbers of Roman troops in Pamphylia during the 3rd century. However, the production of pottery at Sagalassos could not fill the gap left by the disappearance of other important production centres, although it maintained its regional monopoly. From a general point of view the economic activities and municipal life at Sagalassos during the 3rd century were 'business as usual'.

Sagalassos in the 4th to Mid 5th Century AD

Based on the local pottery, the period classified by our ceramologists as 'Late Roman' is subdivided into phase 6, corresponding to the first half of the 4th century, and phase 7, covering the following century and a quarter. These two phases can only be distinguished in the city proper, where a sufficient amount of datable material has been recovered.

Urbanism (F. MARTENS)

The late imperial period was a prosperous time for Sagalassos. The urban survey has shown that there still was a large occupied urban area, although significant

changes are visible in phase 7. Internal troubles resulted in the destruction and burning of the Neon Library, whereas external threats led to the construction of the late fortification wall around AD 400 [see Fig. 1]. This wall approximately followed the circuit of its Hellenistic predecessor, and some stretches of the Hellenistic wall were even incorporated into it. The new wall thus again enclosed an area of ca. 12.8 ha. The promontory of the temple dedicated to Hadrian and Antoninus Pius received a separate wall, adding another ca. 1.10 ha. This wall may date to mid-Byzantine times (see below). Together these two wall circuits enclosed less than a third to a half of the urban area of the imperial period. But the archaeological evidence does not testify to a drastic decline of urban vitality during the late 4th or 5th centuries, and the late antique walled area certainly did not include all the inhabited area of this period. A palatial mansion currently under excavation, for instance, is located outside these walls. It still remains true that elements of internal and external stress may have had a significant impact on the pattern of occupation. The area surrounding the demolished Library apparently never regained its former status. The geophysical survey of the 2003 campaign identified an extensive zone of industrial activity here, with at least 22 kilns or furnaces stretching from just east of the Neon Library east past the theatre. Its date could not yet be established, but the surface material is predominantly late, leading to the conclusion that in this area an industrial quarter may have replaced a previously residential and public zone. The main area of occupation shifted somewhat toward the urban centre at the time of the construction of the late fortification wall, suggesting increased activity within and near this wall. The wall, which protected the main public buildings and the western domestic area, probably primarily served as a refuge offering protection to inhabitants of the city, whether they lived within the wall or not. The urban area of Sagalassos thus remained as extensive and densely occupied during the late imperial period as in the prosperous mid-imperial times, although temporary nucleation occurred and particular parts of the town may have been less densely occupied (Martens 2004).

Generally speaking, the urban infrastructure was also well maintained. The layout of the late fortification wall, which did not include the Doric Fountain House, must have altered the water management in the town centre. Arrangements around the Northwest Heroon illustrate the economical use of water within the fortified circuit, with collection of rain water taking place to the east of the Heroon. To its west the construction of a reservoir or *lacus* served as a collector for an intermittent flow of water originating from melting snow or ice from the mountains (Martens 2004).

***Building Activities* (M. WAELKENS)**

For phase 6, the urban survey and excavations did not produce any sign of new building projects, except on the private level. Rather than investing in public munificence, the elite now turned to building palatial mansions for themselves. To some extent, these mansions imitated life at the governor's and even the imperial court, as is illustrated by a large urban villa currently under excavation [Fig. 6]. Its southern half was built around two major courtyards [Fig. 6, XIII and

monumentality. For example, during the third quarter of the 4th century, the Neon Library was provided with a new facade and a new mosaic floor (Waelkens et al. 2000). This shows the continuing importance attached to the old *paideia* by members of the local elite. It is tempting to assume that descendants of the Flavii, for whom this construction had been a kind of dynastic monument, were responsible for the restoration. On the Upper Agora, the late Antonine *nymphaeum* was provided with statuary in the central *aediculae* and niches of the back wall, probably in the late 4th century (see below). The overwhelming concentration of (probably) reused statues and pedestal bases found among the ruins of the fountain again suggests that members of a specific family repaired the fountain and turned it into a monumental memorial to their ancestors.

The Roman baths also saw a phase of refurbishment during the second half of the 4th century, involving the lavish use of tons of imported marble from Doki-meion as wall veneer and for pilaster capitals. Coloured marble from other parts of the Empire were used for the arrangement of an *opus sectile* floor in a large room in the northern part of the building. During the early 5th century, this room was changed into an *apodyterium*, most likely at the same time as the former 'Kaisersaal' was converted into a second *caldarium*. The decoration of this new complex was in no way inferior in quality to the original 2nd century AD layout.

A major building event in the middle of phase 7, around 400 AD, was the construction of the new city wall (Loots/Waelkens/Depuydt 2000). The careful construction of most wall sections, using *spolia* and incorporating older buildings which had lost their original function, shows that the fortification was not built in panic. It is therefore better understood as a manifestation of civic pride. It may even reflect the old *aemulatio municipalis*, comparable to the walls of Aphrodisias (Ratté 2001, 125). This impulse is clearly visible near the Northwest Gate built between the Doric Temple and the NW Heroon. The newly constructed arched gateway was decorated with early 1st century BC busts of Athena and Ares, taken from the facade of the Bouleuterion, and many of the Bouleuterion weaponry frieze blocks were reused in the wall around the gate. The fact that the old pagan gods of war were incorporated into one of the main city gates as late as the reign of Arcadius may hint to the survival of the old municipal mentality.

Although the rise of Christianity gradually led to the creation of new architectural projects within the town, the repairs discussed above clearly illustrate that classical values were maintained for a long time. Beginning in the early 5th century AD, Christian buildings made their appearance in the urban centre, where the former Bouleuterion forecourt was transformed into a church dedicated to St. Michael, showing that a new authority, i.e. the bishop, had become part of the governing body of the city [Fig. 7].

Encroachment upon Public Space (M. WAELENS)

Usurpation of older structures should not always be seen as a sign of decline, as demonstrated by the transformation of the Augustan Tychaion on the Upper Agora into a dynastic monument dedicated to Gratianus, Valentinian II and Constantia (later replaced by Flavia Eudoxia). In some cases, encroachment upon



Fig. 7: Remains of St. Michael's cathedral built into the courtyard of the Bouleuterion (M. Waelkens).

public space by private constructions may have been organised by the elite who subdivided, leased or sold units to make profit, as discussed above. The urban middle classes (Sodini 2003, 42–45) probably lived in these newly created houses and shops. Since much of the evidence of early encroachment at Sagalassos (beginning in the early 5th century) seems to reflect commercial activity, it may reasonably be assumed that the town remained economically sound and active.

Municipal Life (M. WAELEKENS)

The construction and transformation of the large urban villa in Domestic Area 1 with its impressive reception hall [see Fig. 6, XXII] demonstrates the wealth of the new urban aristocracy and the gradual transition toward an oligarchic type of government. In this context it is remarkable that the Bouleuterion by AD 400 had fallen into such a state of decay that its external façade could be dismantled and reused as building stones in the late Roman fortification. This was probably not only due to the reduced number of councillors, but also to the limited power of the *curia*, which nevertheless continued to exist until the reign of Anastasius. The transformation of the council hall into an atrium belonging to the basilica constructed in its courtyard reflects the growing power of the Church in the course of the 5th century.

It is characteristic for the new political situation that inscriptions honouring members of the local elite or governors completely disappeared during this time. The only inscriptions from this period are found on monuments dedicated to the

emperors (see Devijver/Waelkens 1995; Devijver/Waelkens 1997). These include a milestone of the *caput viae* type on the Lower Agora for Constantine and his sons as well as for Constantius II and Constans, two statue bases for Constantius II on the Upper Agora, a statue for Julian placed in front of the Tiberian gateway giving access to the Lower Agora, and the monument for the Valentinian family on the southern edge of the Upper Agora described above. The last emperor to be honoured was Zenon the Isaurian (Lanckoroński 1892, 228 nr. 208).

What is most striking, however, is that none of these dedications was initiated by members of the local elite, as had been the rule in earlier times. Instead, most inscriptions were erected by "the city" or by "Sagalassos, first city of Pisidia, friend and ally of the Romans", a title which appeared after the construction of the temple dedicated to the divine Hadrian and to Antoninus Pius. The aristocrats that dominated the city probably still paid for these monuments, but now completely identified themselves with the town.

The Urban Economy (J. POBLOME)

The question of why the late Roman workshop was abandoned at some point during the 5th century AD is an important one. This event cannot not be connected with a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, or some other destructive event. As the production of *Sagalassos Red Slip Ware* apparently continued for another two centuries, a lack of raw material does not provide a sufficient explanation either. A remaining possibility is that the proprietor of the area was no longer interested in supporting the production of pottery, but did not find a feasible solution for using this spot. Alternatively, the potters' community may have lost the capacity to continue its craft. This hiatus in production may explain the differences between phases 7 and 8 in the typo-chronological evolution of *Sagalassos Red Slip Ware*. At this point a new generation of potters constructed a new, as yet unidentified workshop. The dump at the top of the eastern slope of the potters' quarter indicates that this early Byzantine workshop was located within the potters' quarter. All of this evidence taken together may reflect an interruption in the local pottery production.

The Suburban Area and the Countryside (H. VANHAVERBEKE)

Few indications of land use and tenure are available in the suburban area for the late imperial period (phases 6 and 7). Pottery, in the form of both table and coarse wares, is abundant, but architectural or funerary/votive elements securely dated to this period are extremely rare. Changing burial customs favoured less monumental tombs and less conspicuous sarcophagi, and led to a preference for vaulted subterranean grave chambers or simple inhumation pits. After five years of intensive survey, only a single suburban villa has been detected which was clearly inhabited in the late imperial period, approximately 4 km southeast of the monumental centre of Sagalassos [see Fig. 4, encircled].

Although it seems likely that several of the early/mid imperial suburban villas were also inhabited in later times, it is very difficult to ascertain whether



Fig. 8: Settlement patterns in the wider territory of Sagalassos during the 4th and the first half of the 5th century AD (H. Vanhaverbeke).

the less abundant late imperial pottery at these sites and the architectural remains are contemporaneous (Vanhaverbeke et al. 2004 and in press b). However, one cannot escape the impression that the members of the elite seem to have moved away from the suburbs to some extent. Since there is no evidence for late *villae* in the territory at that time (see below), it is most unlikely that the elite retreated to the countryside. The grand mansion excavated in the city, dated to the 4th and 5th century (see above), may provide an answer to the question where the elite resided. However, due to the difficulty of establishing the contemporaneity of these events on the basis of surface material, more research is needed to provide a firmer answer (Vanhaverbeke et al. in press b).

Another indicator of possible change in land use patterns in the suburbs is found in the changing values for lead pollution (caused by industrial activities within the city) recovered from cattle bones. Analyses by P. DEGRYSE and W. VAN NEER have revealed a sudden drop in copper and lead within cattle bones from the 2nd century AD onward, during which time farming activity may have moved to more outlying areas of the city's territory. Heavy metal levels suddenly increase again from the 5th century AD onward (Vanhaverbeke et al. in press b). Moreover, an analysis of material taken by the geomorphologists from terraces to the southeast of the city has not only demonstrated their use in late antiquity (from the 4th century AD onward), but also a marked increase in heavy metals as well as phosphorus from animal manure dumped on the terraces. This confirms that intensive farming activities again took place in the immediate vicinity of the city, perhaps as a result of the instability of the early 5th century AD onward.

In the territory of Sagalassos, the late imperial period (phases 6 and 7) is represented by the highest number of sites [cf. Fig. 8 in comparison with Fig. 5], attesting to the vigour of rural life in this time. A new phenomenon that arose during this period was the occupation of sites on hill or mountain tops. This may point to the perception of a threat, most probably posed by the Isaurian raids, causing people to establish settlements at less accessible locations. These sites

provided opportunities for breeding sheep and goats, the importance of which seems to have increased from the first half of the 5th century onward, as suggested by faunal remains retrieved from the excavations at Sagalassos. The new emphasis on sheep and goat could be explained as the result of an investment strategy, in that losing some sheep or goats posed less financial risk than the loss of part of a cattle herd. These changes in subsistence strategies may thus be related to a prevailing political and economic climate of insecurity. However, the Isaurian threat should not be exaggerated. Most of the less accessible sites were not fortified, and habitation in the plains and on the lower slopes remained important throughout the late imperial period. Varied, intensive cultivation still took place in some of the basins situated within the territory of Sagalassos, as is indicated by palynological research (Waelkens et al. 1997a, 244; Waelkens et al. 1999, 705; Decupere 2001, 140f. fig. 99; Vanhaverbeke/Waelkens 2003, 290f.; Vermoere 2004; Vanhaverbeke et al. in press a/b).

Christianisation (P. TALLOEN/M. WAEKENS)

At the beginning of the 4th century, Pisidia was still a country dominated by paganism with only a few centres of Christianity, e.g. at Apollonia-Sozopolis (Buckler/Cálder/Guthrie 1933, nr. 219–225). These centres had yet to leave their mark on the religious landscape (Talloen forthcoming). The situation was to change dramatically by the end of the 4th century as the result of imperial legislation abolishing sacrifice as well as ordering the closure of sanctuaries and the confiscation of their properties (Trombley 1993, 1–97). Consequently, between AD 320 and 435, paganism ceased to be the dominant religion in the cities of Pisidia.

The 'coming of age' of Christianity in Pisidia spelled important changes in urban life. The temples, centerpieces of earlier city plans, were either destroyed or, more commonly, allowed to fall into decay (Talloen forthcoming). Previously housed in *domus ecclesiae* (White 1990), the Christian cult began to mark the architectural landscape from the early 5th century onward, through the construction of a series of monumental churches in the heart of the cities (Harl 2001, 309–312; Talloen forthcoming). At Sagalassos, this is illustrated by the tripartite basilica established in the courtyard of the former Bouleuterion (Waelkens/Talloen in press), whereas elsewhere in Pisidia the church arranged within the Bouleuterion/Odeion at Selge (Machatschek/Schwarz 1981, 104, 107f.) and the conversion of the civic basilica into a Christian sanctuary at Kremna (Mitchell 1995, 220–222) point in the same direction.

Mythological imagery was still to be seen in the contemporary cities, however (Saradi-Mendelovici 1990; Hannestad 1994). The same emperors who ordered the closure of sanctuaries and the abolition of sacrifices also encouraged a respect for pagan temples as monuments of artistic and historical value, and decreed that the statuary belonging to them should be reused elsewhere to embellish the towns (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.3, 8, 15, 18; Hannestad 2002, 637). Through this policy of conservation the imperial authorities hoped to maintain the monuments of the past as important components of a city's image, as well as the civic spirit that had

produced them (Alchermes 1994, 168f.). Such a reuse of mythological sculpture is well attested at Sagalassos, where an entire series of statues was found in the Antonine *nymphaeum* on the Upper Agora that do not belong to the original sculptural decoration of this monument: an effigy of Nemesis, a possible representation of Apollo, three associated statues of Asklepios, Koronis and a socle of a statue of which only the feet remain (Waelkens et al. 1997b, 151–162). They were most probably brought to the *nymphaeum* from other locations within the city at the end of the fourth century, when the pagan sanctuaries which had housed some of these statues went out of use. Although the Church rejected the use of statuary to express its conception of the divine, Christians often shared the pagan belief that deities inhabited their images. By desecrating these representations through decapitation or the carving of crosses, people made sure that the gods or demons would have no means of harming them (Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, 54–56; Trombley 1993, 119f.). This fate may eventually have befallen the statues of Asklepios, of Koronis and of Nemesis, all of which were apparently pushed into the water basin of the Antonine *nymphaeum* on the Upper Agora, as their heads and other parts of the body are missing. For some reason, possibly the strong popularity of the deity in late antiquity (Bowersock 1990, 41–53; Poblome 1998), such a desecration did not affect the two original corner statues of Dionysos. Since they could not be removed without either dismantling or damaging their *aediculae*, Christian zealots later hid them by walling up the corner structures with tuffo blocks, many of which were decorated with crosses inside circles (Waelkens et al. 1997b, 151, 162).

While churches represented the monumental, public expression of the Christian faith in the Pisidian cities, there is no lack of evidence for the religious devotion of private individuals, reflected in the numerous small religious objects found primarily in domestic contexts. The decorated examples in particular provide us with a glance at this religious aspect. Initially, mythological scenery persisted through the early Christian era as an important element of the *instrumentarium domesticum*, such as pottery and jewelry, which display a special preference for Dionysiac scenes (Poblome 1998; Talloen/Poblome in press). In the course of the 5th century, however, Christian iconography gradually took over. The pottery industry switched to decorative motifs proclaiming the new faith in the shape of fishes or, more explicitly, crosses. The decorative motifs also included complete figural scenes, such as the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham depicted on the medallion of a mould-made oil-lamp. Other items of ceramic production were put to Christian use, as indicated by the acclamations of the *Michaelitai*, the adepts of Saint Michael, inscribed on the rims of plates (Talloen/Poblome in press). Sagalassos pottery started to display these Christian motifs in the 5th century AD, at the same time as they appeared elsewhere in the Mediterranean world (Hayes 1997, 62; Waelkens/Talloen in press), and, perhaps more importantly, in the very period when the cities of Pisidia received their Christian architectural appearance (see above). Metal appliances and jewellery were also furnished with Christian motifs. Never far from the mind of Christians in the early Byzantine period were 'evil spirits' (Russell 1983). These were countered

by wearing amulets, several examples of which, depicting Solomon as a horseman striking a prostrate female demon, have been found at Sagalassos (Scheers 1997, 338 nr. 289–291; Talloen forthcoming). However, the new Christian imagery did not mark a complete break with traditional pagan iconography. Although it generated some distinctively Christian images such as crosses and fishes, it also incorporated and re-interpreted themes from the pagan past of Pisidia, like the indigenous rider-deity (Talloen/Poblome in press). Especially remarkable in this respect was the continued use of terracotta figurines in Christian worship, which most probably represented military saints (Talloen forthcoming).

Conclusion (M. WAELEKENS)

The 4th and the 5th centuries at Sagalassos were a period of transition and change. Economically, the 4th century was generally prosperous, and during this time the monumental character of the city was maintained and, where necessary, repaired. Around AD 400, there are signs of both internal and external stress, the latter of which led to the construction of a new city wall surrounding only part of the town. Its careful construction, however, reflects civic pride. The purpose of this wall was to protect the urban centre and to provide a place of refuge for the surrounding inhabitants, rather than to enclose the entire inhabited area. The survey evidence seems to suggest that life outside the late Roman wall continued much as before, which is also illustrated by the excavation of a rich private dwelling located just outside the walls. However, this continued extramural occupation does not necessarily imply that the construction of the fortification wall had no impact whatsoever on the settlement pattern. Surface finds dating from 350 to 450/75 AD (phase 7) seem to suggest increased activity within and near the walls. Although the construction of the late city wall at Sagalassos is not necessarily a sign of unbroken prosperity as it seems to have been at Aphrodisias, this large-scale communal enterprise is certainly not a sign of decline either. It may even represent status-competition among the cities of Pisidia. Continuity is thus reflected in many facets of the late Roman urban architecture.

On the other hand, there are clear signs of change as well. The fact that the city was now ruled by a new elite of oligarchs and bishops is clearly documented by the palatial mansion with its large reception hall and private bath complex, and by the transformation of the Bouleuterion into one of the city's first churches. It is also seen in the disappearance of public inscriptions honouring the local elite, magistrates or governors, whereas statues and monuments dedicated to members of the imperial family were still erected.

Although parts of the population of Sagalassos had become Christianised, this was only expressed in the urban fabric in the course of the 5th century AD, when a richly furnished cathedral was built, symbolically, in the courtyard of the former Bouleuterion. This clearly demonstrates that, as in other late Roman towns, the *bouleutai* had lost their power while the church strengthened its position within the city. While the former temple of Apollo Klarios was also converted into a church (cf. below), the Doric Temple was incorporated into the late Roman fortification wall.

That both internal and external stresses did affect the city is shown by the fact that the northeastern part of town did not recover its former status after this time. The pottery production underwent some changes toward the end of phase 7, but the reasons for this are not yet clear. In agriculture, the focus on growing cash crops, involving the use of large numbers of cattle, was gradually replaced by an emphasis on raising sheep and goats as a safer form of investment. On the whole, nothing was yet amiss, and a peak of rural occupation with numerous, large sites can be detected in the wider territory. The mid imperial suburban villas were also possibly still in use. For the citizens of Sagalassos, these gradual changes were probably not experienced as 'striking' or 'revolutionary' events that drastically changed their lives.

Sagalassos in the Mid/Late 5th to Mid 7th Century AD

Based on the pottery evidence, this period, described by our ceramologists as 'Early Byzantine', is subdivided into phases 8 (450/75 – 550/75 AD) and 9 (550/75 – 640/75 AD). On chronological and cultural terms, perhaps only the latter period really deserves the qualification as 'Byzantine'.

***The City during Phase 8 (450/75 – 550/75 AD): Urbanism* (F. MARTENS)**

The evidence produced by intensive urban survey suggests that the entire urban area of ca. 31.5 ha enclosed within the *necropoleis* was still for the most part inhabited during the 6th century AD, although the focus of activity apparently now lay in the area encircled by the late city wall [see Fig. 1]. Maintenance of this wall was probably given up by the early 6th century AD, as in some places debris was piled up against it (Poblome 1995). This resulted from a major earthquake with devastating effects that struck Sagalassos and its territory in the period covered by phase 8. The earthquake has traditionally been dated to AD 518, but it can now be attributed with more confidence to the time around AD 500 or possibly even ca. AD 498 (Sintubin et al. 2003). Although the city to some extent recovered from this catastrophe and major rebuilding programmes began almost immediately after the event, it was hit by the recurrent bubonic plague shortly afterwards. The plague first struck in AD 541/42, and then returned regularly, leading to a higher number of victims and greater damage to the city's economy than the earthquake had caused.

The earthquake had significant consequences for the urban infrastructure which was in general still well maintained, demonstrating the competence of the civic government. With respect to the network of streets, two divergent processes probably related to the earthquake became visible in the period between AD 450/75 and 550/75: whereas the repair of some streets was carried out with a traditional sense of monumentality, other streets were rebuilt with a strongly reduced width. In some of the previously important streets the pavement slabs were removed, perhaps in order to raise the street level by dumping some earthquake debris. This may indicate that a large scale rebuilding programme was to be

initiated which was either interrupted before new pavement slabs could be put into place or given lesser priority at some points within the town. This could have been the result of a number of factors, including the plague's impact upon the civic authorities and urban aristocracy. Soon after the earthquake, several streets were encroached upon by private structures (Martens 2004, 439, 452f. 456).

The water network was also well-maintained in early-Byzantine times, but after the earthquake there seems to have been a reduction of the water supply reaching the town, possibly resulting from the damage to the aqueducts or the disappearance of springs caused by tectonic movements. Two 6th century AD water distribution points were still functioning. The Late Hellenistic Doric Fountain house was abandoned as a public fountain, and its former courtyard was filled up to the level of the water basin in order to support terracotta pipes directly carrying water to other sites in the town. A channel starting from a settling tank behind the back wall of the structure also carried water in the direction of the Upper Agora. A second distribution point was located immediately west of the NW Heroon, where a reservoir for seasonal flow had been built around 400 AD which continued to function. Various indications have been found for the increased importance of collecting rain water. Some of these water collecting structures still exhibited a sense of monumentality. This was the case with a large basin built along the western edge of the Upper Agora and with the double fountain located immediately to the east of the NW Heroon, the interior of which was covered with different types of coloured marble. New outlets were cut at a much lower level in the parapets of the basins of both the Antonine *nymphaeum* on the Upper Agora and the Severan *nymphaeum* on the Lower Agora. This seems to confirm that the once lavishly supplied town now experienced some water shortages. These shortages may not have been life-threatening, however, as structures such as the Roman baths remained at least partially in use until the later 6th and probably even the 7th century (Martens 2004).

Building activities (M. WAELEKENS)

Despite the massive destruction caused by a seismic catastrophe around 500 AD, most of the city's monuments were afterwards restored with a sense for monumentality, demonstrating the survival of the old municipal spirit into the early 6th century. This was especially visible on both *agorai*. In the southwest corner of the Lower Agora the collapsed gateway of Tiberian date was partially rebuilt by erecting its west wing and the first adjoining column of the central part of the gate, thus forming an L-shaped monument with three columns. Many of the remaining gateway blocks were reused for the arrangement of a monumental stairway giving access to the square. The square's western portico was also completely rebuilt, as was its back wall, reusing the original rusticated ashlar blocks, although in new locations. In the substructures of the Roman baths a new public latrine was arranged in the southwest corner, possibly replacing an older toilet in the collapsed northwest corner. On the Upper Agora, the west portico was rebuilt and a new water basin laid out in front of it. In the northeast corner of the square a new row of arcaded workshops was constructed, reusing the corner

of the Augustan 'Northeast Building'. It is possible that the late Antonine *nymphaeum* was also partially rebuilt as part of the same reconstruction programme. This certainly was the case with the terrace building behind it. All these interventions were carefully planned, although the building technology with which they were carried out consisted of roughly mortared rubble walls and *spolia*.

Encroachment upon Public Space and Subdivision of Buildings

(T. PUTZEYS/M. WAELKENS/T. VAN THUYNE/W. VAN NEER)

Maintenance of the city's monumental appearance continued until at least the early 6th century AD. At the same time, the Christianisation of the town was carried out from the early 5th century AD onward, and a certain degree of abandonment and neglect of former public spaces became more pronounced in the urban fabric, as older structures were transformed or became subdivided. The first signs of this phenomenon have been discussed above referring to the first half of the 5th century. For the latter part of this century, the 2003 campaign exposed structures built into the northern portico of the shrine for Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, which no longer fulfilled its original function. The earthquake of ca. AD 500 and the recurring plague must have decimated the urban population and left many dwellings uninhabited. At the same time, these phenomena may have accelerated the encroachments upon public space. In fact, after the earthquake, a second encroachment phase occurred in the former shrine for the imperial cult, in which several building elements of the collapsed temple proper were now reused.

In the course of the 6th century (possibly only during phase 9), mortared rubble walls connecting the columns to the back wall and to one another subdivided the long walkway of the western portico on the Lower Agora into several units, the walls of which were covered with plaster. The northernmost of these units remained in use as a (work)shop until the mid 7th century earthquake levelled the whole area. Remains of painted wall plaster indicate that some of these workshops were well decorated (Waelkens 2000/01). The 2003 campaign has also shown that the eastern portico of the Lower Agora was never rebuilt after the earthquake of ca. AD 500 in its previous state, except perhaps for the southern extremity. The central part of the agora and the shops behind it were transformed into a five-room complex with primarily commercial functions [Fig. 9]. The contextual study of material from these rooms shows that they contained objects specifically related to commercial activities such as a weighing equipment (Putzeys et al. forthcoming). A kitchen, a central living/working room and a place to receive costumers could be identified, leading to the suggestion that the complex might have been a shop as well as the residence of its owner, analogous to shops E5 and E2A at Sardis (Crawford 1990). A handle from an early Byzantine *authepsa*, a metal vessel containing hot herb wine, point to the possible use of this complex as a *thermopolion*. To the north of this complex, in the curved northeastern entrance to the square, two small guardrooms with a cistern, identified by terracotta heads of helmeted soldiers and several pieces of weaponry found inside and around them, were installed to control traffic to and from the agora.



Fig. 9: View of the early Byzantine *thermopolion*(?) established inside the eastern portico of the Lower Agora (M. Waelkens).

The large palatial mansion to the north of the Roman baths also suffered extensive damage during the earthquake. However, the mansion was completely restored, and apparently even provided with new large halls in its southern part, demonstrating that the inhabitants were still rather wealthy [see Fig. 6, XL], although the walls built during this reconstruction phase are of a lesser quality than the original ones, containing *spolia* and mortared rubble. In the upper floor of the house the reception hall was completely restored and connected to a series of small rooms located immediately to the south of it. On the ground floor the two courtyards were now completely separated from each other by the construction of rooms inside the former open arcades. In addition, the private bath complex was reduced in size. Its two easternmost rooms were deprived of their *hypocaustum* floors and must have served a new function.

Despite these major restoration activities, an examination of the ceramic, faunal and macro-botanic material (which was analysed by T. VAN THUYNE) has shown that the southern part of the mansion had already lost part of its grandeur during this period (Putzeys et al. in press). The eastern of the two original courtyards [Fig. 6, XXV] which had formerly occupied a central position in the private part of the house, as shown by rich vegetal and figural stucco fragments, was now used as a storage room, containing a ceramic assemblage dated to the second half of the 5th and the first half of the 6th century, and an abundance of

sherds from vessels used for the storage of imported goods (especially Late Roman I wine-amphorae from Gaza and oil-amphorae from Cyprus). In addition, macro-botanic material recovered from a vaulted room to the north suggests that the storage of dried dung cakes took place here. One thus gets the impression that spaces which were essential for circulation within the house or had a more or less representative character were now used for the storage of products ranging from imported wine and olive oil to dung cakes. Whatever this may imply for this dwelling, the presence of the wine attests to the continuity of a long distance trade.

Municipal Life (M. WAELEKENS)

Although there is no epigraphic evidence from this period, the scale and systematic repair of the urban infrastructure as well as the rebuilding of public and utilitarian monuments, though apparently not brought to completion everywhere, still points to the existence of an efficient authority supervising and organising these activities. This authority most probably consisted of the bishop and the *proteuontes*, who still lived in large, palatial mansions. These mansions gradually came to be used also for more rural activities, and former representative rooms were converted into storage facilities. This may have become necessary as the elite gradually abandoned their suburban *villae*. Unfortunately, ceramic chronology does not yet allow us to determine exactly the role the AD 541/42 plague might have had in influencing the new layout of the city or the onset of the 'ruralisation' of these rich mansions.

The City during Phase 9 (550/75 – 640/75 AD): Urbanism

(F. MARTENS/J. POBLOME/P. TALLOEN)

During the last century of its existence, most probably as a result of the recurrent plague, Sagalassos seems to have become a completely altered city. The large-scale occupation of the town came to an end at some point after the mid 7th century AD when Sagalassos was struck by an earthquake, with an estimated magnitude between 6.4 and 6.8 and an epicentre either in the city or at a distance of less than 20 km from it (Sintubin et al. 2003; Simillox-Tohon et al. in press). On the basis of survey evidence it can be concluded that the occupation of the town had already become less dense and significantly less extensive between the later 6th and the mid 7th century AD. Indeed, phase 9 assemblages proved to be extremely difficult to recognize in the evidence from the surface collection. Most of the table ware pottery types of phase 8 continued to be used into phase 9, however, so that the identification of phase 9 contexts depends on the presence of typical diagnostic sherds. But it remains true that phase 9 contexts were generally very localised and not dispersed as widely as the surface assemblages of previous periods. Further urban survey, covering a more extended part of the urban area, combined with test soundings carried out outside the monumental centre will allow us to generate more decisive answers. However, at this point of the research it is significant that almost all of the identified phase 9 surface assemblages were

found within the original domestic area, which was eventually enclosed by the late Roman fortification wall. Phase 9 assemblages were also excavated in the palatial mansion outside this wall. An important factor of bias which should be taken into account when interpreting this evidence is that survivors of the final earthquake may have salvaged usable contents from any accessible spaces before moving elsewhere. This would certainly alter the picture of the final phase of large scale occupation.

7th century deposits again do not occur everywhere at Sagalassos, but have mainly been identified in the western and eastern porticoes of the Lower Agora, the *apodyterium* of the Roman Baths, a series of rooms in the early Byzantine housing complex and the former (work)shop complex to the northeast of the Upper Agora. Contemporaneous material was not found in the structure which encroached upon the north portico of the Temple of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. That this material does not occur everywhere within ancient Sagalassos is certainly meaningful. On the other hand, the fact that most 7th century AD material is found under well preserved conditions, mostly as primary refuse with a limited amount of secondary reworking, suggests that the presence of the material is related to particular patterns of occupational behaviour, with material being dumped at specific places, while other areas were kept clean of rubbish. That occupation in those areas stopped after the earthquake of the 7th century AD possibly prevented the material from being reworked and replaced in secondary fill or dumps, which would be the normal pattern if occupation had continued. The absence of 7th century AD material does not, therefore, imply that no activity whatsoever was taking place in these areas, but it does suggest a reduction of the urban landscape when compared to the uniform presence of 6th century AD material.

During phase 9, a Christian cemetery was established in the small area between the *temenos* of the Temple of Apollo now converted into a church, and the back wall of the western portico of the Lower Agora. Despite the fact that the laws forbidding burial within the city were still largely respected in late antique towns (certainly well into the 6th century), this should not be interpreted as a sign that Sagalassos by the 7th century was no longer a 'city', according to the ancient definition, although the phenomenon did mark the end of its existence as a *polis*. In fact, whereas the location of *martyria* was originally dictated by the location of the tombs of the martyrs, from the 5th century onward the habit of disinterring the remains of saints gave many other areas a chance to enjoy the protection and the blessing of relics. The protection that saints were deemed to grant to the faithful and the resources that they could bring to churches go far in explaining why their remains were transported from their original resting places to intramural sites. This could account for the presence of transept-churches in the urban centres of Kremna and Sagalassos, such as the *martyrium* church built into the remains of the former Temple of Apollo. This transfer, together with the demand for a place of burial as close as possible to a sanctified site, eventually surmounted the traditional distinction between a city for the living and a separate cemetery for the dead (Dagron 1977, 11-19). The absorption of cemeteries into the urban fabric

and their association with Christian churches thus implied a major break with classical city-life of the *polis*-type.

With respect to the infrastructure, the construction of rudimentary cisterns suggests that water shortages became more pressing during the final phase of the city's existence (Martens 2004, 547). These cisterns include one built on the northern row of seats of the former Bouleuterion which was turned into an atrium-like open courtyard for St. Michael's church, and also the large cistern arranged in the middle of the street located to the south of the early 6th century AD row of (work)shops to the northeast of the Upper Agora.

There is also quite a lot of evidence indicating a concern for the city's subsistence, eventually leading to a 'ruralisation' of the town. A public latrine that had been installed in the ground floor of the Roman baths during the (early) 6th century was transformed into a collector of manure, mixed with lime, probably used as an agricultural fertiliser to increase yields (Waelkens 2000/01). In the case of Sagalassos, this strategy may have been a response to an increased pressure for food production which was addressed by cultivating fields in the immediate periphery of the city. This pressure was exacerbated by the disruption of the previous supply network and/or by an influx of refugees from the countryside. Pollen analysis of an early 7th century AD core sampled in the human manure from the Roman baths attests the cultivation of walnut and possibly also cereals in the immediate vicinity of the town (Vermoere 2004).

Gradually, the dumping and evacuation of waste may have become problematic. In the upper city, the 6th century AD water basin to the west of the Upper Agora eventually became a dump, while the Trajanic street fountain built into the curved terrace wall forming the northeastern entrance to the Lower Agora ceased to provide water while its balustrade was removed and the interior filled with refuse from the slaughter of cattle. Cattle dung was also found inside the abandoned guardrooms nearby. Even the former reception hall in the rich mansion, possibly used as a kitchen or dining/living room, had a disposal system for food refuse emptying into the private fountain of the villa and precluding any further use of its water for drinking purposes. At least some of the workshops in the northeast corner of the Upper Agora and in the eastern portico of the Lower Agora became places for public waste disposal, as did one of the *praefurnia* of the Roman baths (Martens 2004, 548). However, one has to be very careful when interpreting this type of evidence, as it is difficult to determine to what extent similar patterns of waste disposal in abandoned structures may have already existed in earlier times, since they could have been cleared out later. It seems likely, however, that in this period there was no municipal organisation, which had the authority to keep the public places clean and to organize the removal of manure, either resulting from the disappearance of such services, which certainly continued to function at Sagalassos until the 6th century (Martens 2004, 416, 421) or from a general 'decline'.

Building activities (M. WAELEKENS)

Except for church building or repair, there is no sign of new, large scale construction during phase 9.

Encroachment upon Public Space, Subdivision of Buildings and Abandonment of Structures (T. PUTZEYS/T. VAN THUYNE/M. WAELEKENS/W. VAN NEER)

When the economic situation began to decline from the second half of the 6th century onward, the eastern portico of the Lower Agora was gradually abandoned. It is clear that during the 7th century AD, the two guardrooms near the northeast access to the square were no longer occupied, while inside the *thermopolion*(?) established in the central part of the former east portico a 7th century AD floor deposit was recovered in only one room. The kitchen of the complex seems to have been cleared of any usable material, leaving behind material that was not useful, including a cooking pot with the remains of a premature human foetus.

The degradation of living standards from the second half of the 6th century onward is clearly attested in the Lower Agora, where in 2003 at least two waste dumps were identified (see above). One of the southern shops served as a site for the disposal of kitchen and table refuse dating from phase 9 of the locally produced *Sagalassos Red Slip Ware*. In the western portico along the same square, only the northernmost workshop unit contained similar material *in situ*. Although one must be very careful with the interpretation of such evidence, as it is unclear to what extent material was recovered from the ruins after the 7th century AD earthquake, it seems to suggest that structures were increasingly abandoned prior to the final destruction of the town. The same picture emerges from the row of early 6th century AD workshops to the northeast of the Upper Agora, at least one of which was walled off and served as a place for public waste disposal (Martens 2004, 548).

The arrangement of the palatial mansion also radically changed during the second half of the 6th century. The original landlord and his family may have abandoned the building, or at least part of it, as the mansion was subdivided into at least three different architectural units, closed off from one another. Apparently, the reception hall on the upper level lost its representative function. Its wall and floor coverings are no longer present today. They were probably already removed before the 7th century AD earthquake. The presence of refuse dumps in the small rooms south of the former reception hall [see Fig. 6, XXIII, XXIV, XXVI], including one on top of the stairway leading to the cellar, confirms the decline of living standards. This can also be noted in the architecture, composed of very irregular walls made of *spolia*. The waste disposal areas contained large quantities of discarded ceramics, bone (including nearly 25,000 fish bones) and, to a lesser extent, plant remains. The abundance of cooking vessels indicates that the former reception/dining hall may have served as a food preparation area during phase 9 (Putzeys et al. in press). At this time the room was emptied and could have provided adequate space for cooking and eating. The recovered

material reflects occupation by people who pragmatically used whatever space they needed to cook, eat and dump their waste. Although the economic situation had significantly worsened, the waste disposal units including fish and glass imported from Egypt confirm the continuation of trade patterns and the survival of some aspects of a high living standard. The inhabitants of these structures were certainly not squatters. The presence of other phase 9 material was noted in at least two rooms located at ground level [see Fig. 6, XIII, XXXIX], which seem to have belonged to a different dwelling, although this cannot yet be confirmed. The whole housing unit was finally abandoned after an earthquake destroyed the site completely sometime in the second half of the 7th century AD (Sintubin et al. 2003).

Municipal Life (M. WAELENS)

There can be no doubt that during the final years of the large scale occupation of Sagalassos the city increasingly lost its urban appearance and lifestyle. Sagalassos assumed the character of a large village where people discarded their waste wherever they could, while an effective authority which could have ordered waste removal was no longer present. Although long distance trade still reached some families in the city, living conditions were certainly more cramped and less hygienic than before, reflecting a decline of urban life.

The Urban Economy: Farming (M. WAELENS)

During phase 8, pollen remains still document a flourishing olive culture, although it is clear that this diminished before the earthquake of the 7th century AD which rapidly eliminated it (Vermoere 2004). The effects of this earthquake exacerbated the effects of the Arab raids of the 640s which had already propelled a shift toward goat breeding before the seismic catastrophe struck the area.

Ceramic Production (J. POBLOME)

During phase 8, ceramic production continued, although with a greater production of *oinophoroi* for export to Egypt, and new types of larger table wares and increasing quantities of coarse wares (Poblome 1999). At the same time the number of imports gradually increased (e.g. late Roman 1 amphorae from the 6th century AD onwards, as well as stamped *unguentaria*; Degeest et al. 1999). Because the early Byzantine workshops have not been excavated, it is too early yet to judge when and how the manufactory mode of production came to an end. The earthquake which struck Sagalassos in the course of the 7th century AD, spelled an end to organized urban life, including the local pottery producing tradition. The determination of the chronological position of the final pottery assemblage at Sagalassos may provide a *terminus post quem* for the seismic disaster, but the lack of well defined 7th century AD deposits, especially from the second half of the century, in this part of Asia Minor or the eastern Mediterranean in general hampers the drawing of firm conclusions. On strict ceramological grounds, there is thus no necessity to place the earthquake around the middle of

the 7th century. Indeed, any date within the second half of the century is feasible. A less definitive link between the earthquake and the 7th century AD deposits therefore seems to be recommended.

It is certain, however, that the centuries old monopoly enjoyed throughout the region by *Sagalassos Red Slip Ware* was broken in the course of the 7th century AD. Other wares began to be imported into Sagalassos, including table wares from nearby Bağsaray (Poblome et al. 2000, 681f.) and a newly identified Asia Minor fabric of an as yet unknown provenance (Poblome et al. 2001).

Metallurgy (N. KELLENS/P. DEGRYSE)

Evidence for the local production of iron at Sagalassos and its territory is documented for the period spanning the mid to late 5th century AD until the mid 7th century AD. Excavation contexts at Sagalassos revealed a large amount of iron production waste (Kellens et al. 2003, 545), for example inside erosion layers and fills within and around the Neon library and the late Hellenistic fountain house (Kucha et al. 1995, 273), indicating that smithing activities were practiced within the city proper. Hematite (iron) ore and some iron smelt debris were retrieved from late Roman to early Byzantine contexts, which lead us to conclude that at least some small-scale iron smelting activities also took place close to the city centre (Degryse 2001, 224). In the territory of the city remains of smelting and smithing processes are attested. Smelting sites thus seem to have been located in the territory, combining iron production activities with primary smithing work which produced iron bars and billets, which were transported to the city, where these materials were further reworked into artefacts.

Morphological identification of the iron production waste material from the city confirmed that the overall majority can be classified as smithing debris. A second large category of artefacts comprises non-diagnostic slag. These fragmented pieces of slag are probably the remains of larger smithing cakes which show similar macroscopic characteristics. Traces of ore, tap slag and bloom could be identified to a lesser extent, indicating that at least some small-scale iron smelting (perhaps on building sites for producing architectural fittings or within a military context for producing armour) must have taken place nearby the city. So far, no tools, furnaces or other structures associated with smelting activities could be identified within the city proper.

The identification of a metal-smithing workshop (Kellens et al. 2003, 549f.) could shed light on the organisation of the smithing activities practised in workshops located in the city centre. Earlier excavations in the west portico of the Upper Agora revealed several building phases for the portico complex, the original layout of which dates to the 2nd century AD. A first reorganization of the area, probably dating to the 5th century, resulted in the subdivision of the northern part of the portico into several (work)shops (see above). A two-room workshop proved to be of particular interest, because several flakes of iron and droplets of hammer scale (a waste product of hammering the hot iron into a final object) were found here. An additional base of a smithing hearth was also identified. Circular burning marks on the bedrock floor level were investigated, again exhibiting

traces of iron flakes and hammerscale droplets. This late Roman floor level is likely to be the oldest phase (early 5th century AD) of a metal-smithing workshop. On top of this, another floor level (AD 450 to 550/575) was documented. It contained fragments of a furnace bottom in association with burnt clay pieces, tile fragments and charcoal, most likely related to the latest occupation of the metal workshop, which was possibly active until its final destruction during the mid 7th century AD earthquake. Lead isotope analysis carried out by P. DEGRYSE lead to the conclusion that the iron ore worked into artefacts in the smithy was imported from the smelting site of Tekeli Tepe (cf. below). Economic transactions between the city and its hinterland during the 5th–6th centuries AD can thus still be seen to a certain extent.

The Suburban Area and the Countryside

(H. VANHAVERBEKE/W. VAN NEER/P. DEGRYSE/N. KELLENS)

The suburban area has yielded quite a lot of pottery from the early Byzantine period, especially on the slopes to the south of the city. However, the amount of table ware vs. that of common wares significantly decreased in comparison to the preceding centuries. This decrease is probably the result of changes in the ceramic record. In the city a similar gradual replacement of finer wares by coarse cooking wares and imports (from the middle of the 6th century AD onward) has been observed (Degeest et al. 1999; Degeest 2000, 258; Vanhaverbeke et al. in press a).

What is more striking with regard to the early Byzantine period is the lack of evidence for continuing elite residence in the suburban area. Suburban villas, furnished with mosaics and baths and accompanied by monumental tombs and olive presses, are attested for the 1st to 3rd centuries AD, after which time they seem to disappear. It is possible that these complexes remained in use in later centuries, but archaeological evidence to support this is so far lacking. The elite seems now to have lived predominantly in the city itself. There is, however, evidence of ongoing elite patronage in the suburbs, notably of church building, as indicated by the remains of a church dating to the early 6th century AD (Vanhaverbeke et al. 2004 and in press b).

Several indications support the notion of changing landuse in the suburban area. The land there was used for mixed residential (*villae suburbanae*) and economic (olive cultivation, possibly horticulture) purposes during the imperial period. This changed over time, as indicated by sherds weathered by ancient manuring activities. These sherds date from both the imperial and early Byzantine periods. But the nature of manuring in each period seems to have been different. Manuring in imperial times was most probably related to horticulture on small plots between the villas (cf. Vanhaverbeke et al. in press a), whereas in early Byzantine times it seems to have had a quite different character. As mentioned above, geological and geomorphological analyses indicate an increase in the phosphor-content of the soils that accumulated behind terrace walls near the city from the 5th century onward, resulting from intensive manuring. Marked changes at Sagalassos after the middle of the 6th century AD support the hypoth-

esis that the city gradually lost its urban character and was perhaps reduced to a refugee town in which the dependent population could gather in times of insecurity. A tightly concentrated population, albeit later decimated by the plague, would have required sufficient resources in the immediate neighbourhood, i.e. the suburban area. In this context, manuring made sense. That Sagalassos became more dependent on its immediate surroundings is also expressed indirectly in the cattle bone from the excavations. From the 5th century onward, this bone shows an increase in copper and lead-pollution. As mentioned above, this has been interpreted as evidence that the feeding area of these animals was now closer to a source of pollution, i.e. the city. This was possibly due to a feeling of increased insecurity. Cattle also produced dung that could be used as manure. Finally, palynological analyses of cores taken at the city's baths have shown that walnut and cereals were cultivated close to Sagalassos in early Byzantine times (Vermoere 2004).

When all this evidence is considered together, it is clear that a fundamental change took place in the city's suburban area in late Roman and early Byzantine times. Beginning in the 5th century AD, the suburban area was gradually transformed from a primarily residential area to an intensely cultivated one. This transition may have precluded the construction of additional elite villas. Changes in the suburbs thus preceded marked changes in the city itself by 100 to 150 years. Although the city seems to have declined rapidly only after ca. AD 550, evidence from the suburbs shows that a prelude to that decline took place a century earlier, when increased pressures upon the provision of the city's subsistence became visible.

Survey work has recorded a decreasing number of sites for the early Byzantine period in the wider territory of Sagalassos [Fig. 10]. However, the interpretation of this pattern is not straightforward. The dating of the sites has been based upon the chronological evidence provided by table wares, which decreased in quantity after the middle of the 6th century. It thus may be supposed that additional sites were occupied in early Byzantine times, but that their ceramic record, which consists for the most part of coarse pottery, does not provide sufficiently tight chronological information.² However, given the many challenges to rural settlement at this time (see below), it is also possible that a genuine contraction of rural settlement took place (Vanhaverbeke et al. 2004 and in press b). Indeed, plotting the number of villages vs. the number of farms [Fig. 11] makes it clear that the importance of villages increased to the detriment of farms, and that there was a trend toward greater settlement nucleation (Vanhaverbeke et al. 2004).

The apparent decline in the number of sites in early Byzantine times may thus be chiefly attributable to a nucleation of settlement. Regarding the question why this nucleation occurred, the fact that strategically located habitation sites on hill or mountain tops [Figs. 10–11] gained importance during the same period may provide a clue. During the 5th century, Pisidia witnessed several episodes of

² Phase 9 has not been attested in pottery retrieved from the rural surveys at all. Most probably, at that time locally produced wares were in use.



Fig. 10: Settlement patterns in the wider territory of Sagalassos during the early Byzantine period (middle of 5th to middle of the 7th centuries AD) (H. Vanhaverbeke).

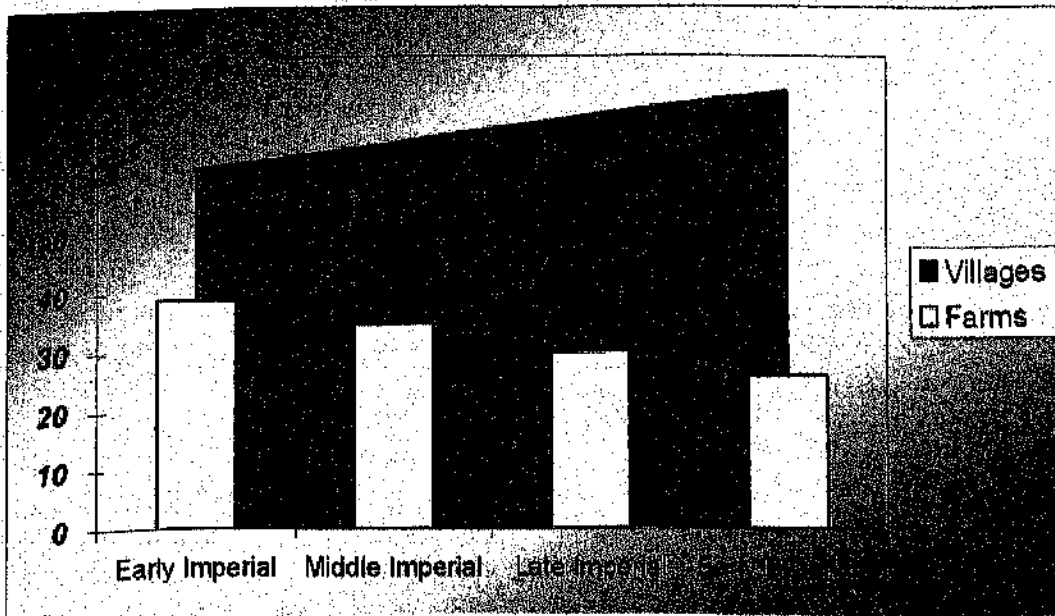


Fig. 11: Graph showing the gradual disappearance of isolated *villae*/farmsteads and the nucleation in larger settlements during late antiquity (H. Vanhaverbeke).

turmoil, caused by the revolt of the Ostrogoth mercenaries under Tribigild, who marched from Phrygia through Pisidia to Pamphylia in 399 AD, and especially by the raids of the Isaurians during the years 404–406 AD. It was as a result of the latter threat that a new military command was created in Asia Minor, the *comitatus* of Pamphylia, Pisidia and Lycaonia. The 6th century AD was characterized by a resurgence of brigandage in the Pisidian countryside, leading Justinian to issue

an edict in 548 AD which brought Pisidia and Lycaonia under the control of a *dux* in order to suppress the brigands (*Nov. Iust.* 24.1; cf. Vanhaverbeke/Waelkens 2003, 289; Vanhaverbeke et al. 2004 and in press b). In this atmosphere of insecurity, dispersed settlement, especially common in the 1st to 3rd centuries AD, must have become risky, and people opted for the safer surroundings of villages in the hills. The Justinianic *Novella* confirms this nucleated settlement pattern when stating that the Pisidian brigands lived in very large, populous villages. The plague of AD 541/42 probably accelerated this movement.

However, one cannot speak of 'decline' in the countryside in the early Byzantine period. In fact, one can even argue for rural prosperity (cf. Whittow 2001, 151f.), which is certainly the case in the territory of Sagalassos, where villages became increasingly involved in economic activities previously confined to the city, such as ceramic production and metallurgy. The pottery kiln near the modern village of Bağsaray, ca. 20 km south-west of Sagalassos, seems to have become an important producer of coarse wares from the second half of the 6th century AD onward (Poblome et al. 2000; Vanhaverbeke/Waelkens 2003, 290). At Tekeli Tepe, situated in the hills ca. 8 km south-east of Sagalassos, an important 7th century AD metal working site has been identified, where ore was extracted and processed into workable iron (Degryse et al. 2003a–b). This economic shift could have been the result of a disruption in international and local trade caused by unrest in the Taurus district, e.g. by the Isaurian raids. Faced with regional instability, people may have turned to a more self-sufficient economy centred on the villages (Waelkens et al. 1997a, 244; Waelkens 2000/01, 76; Vanhaverbeke/Waelkens 2003, 290).

Within this context of rural prosperity, there is at first sight surprisingly little evidence for elite involvement in the city's territory during the early Byzantine period. While several monumental tombs have been identified for the early and middle imperial period, most of which were probably located in the vicinity of elite estates, after the 4th century AD no such evidence exists. This may be the result of a change in burial customs, but may also be related to a retreat of the elite to the city. There is no firm evidence for the continued existence of larger estates in early Byzantine times, because it is very difficult to ascertain the contemporaneity of pottery from this period with (undated) evidence of elite activity (such as presses, marble revetments and window glass) at specific sites. The ceramics recovered may be evidence either of the continued use of these estate centres in early Byzantine times, or of a later occupation unrelated to their former use. However, elite activity may have been expressed in another way during the 5th to 7th centuries AD. Rural churches are perhaps not only indications of the Christianisation of the countryside, but also markers of elite patronage. Of the twenty villages occupied in Early Byzantine times, four were provided with an identifiable church, while other churches were located near a further six villages (Vanhaverbeke et al. 2004 and in press b).

Geochemical prospections in the territory undertaken by P. DEGRYSE and N. KELLENS encountered a rich variety of natural mineral resources, from which several locations for iron ore extraction and the production of workable iron

could be isolated (Degryse et al. 2003a). Around Tekeli Tepe, Köyünü and Dereköy many traces of metalworking have been found, indicating large-scale smelting and (primary?) smithing activities. Furthermore, the iron ores quarried and processed at Tekeli Tepe were still transported to metal workshops at Sagalassos during this period (see above). At least two different sites for the extraction and production of iron were active in the territory of the city during the 6th to 7th century AD. Ceramic finds date this activity to the early Byzantine period, and confirm the decentralisation of previously urban industrial activities. This is also supported by the evidence for ceramic production, as early Byzantine tile and pottery have been identified at various spots in the territory (Poblome et al. 2000). The early Byzantine period thus was not a period of decline in the Sagalassian countryside. On the contrary, 'transformation' and even 'prosperity' seem to have been the keywords for the period from ca. AD 450 to 650, as the countryside took over a number of activities previously concentrated at or near Sagalassos itself.

The Christian Topography (P. TALLOEN)

The construction of new churches, such as the transept-basilica within the former *stadion*, the reuse of the dismantled ashlars and entablatures of the Dionysos Temple, the construction of a church around AD 500 to replace a mid 2nd century AD shrine for an unidentified female deity on Alexander's Hill (discovered in 2003), the building of a sepulchral church on a hill to the west of Alexander's Hill and the construction of smaller churches in the western domestic areas, including the conversion of former pagan sanctuaries into Christian places of worship all took place during the phases under consideration here (Waelkens/Talloon in press).

Throughout Pisidia, an initial wave of church-building was followed by the construction of many more Christian sanctuaries in the 5th and 6th centuries, illustrating the Christian takeover of public space. Christian monuments came to dominate the monumental centre, where some of the major pagan sanctuaries, like the sanctuary of Apollo Klarios at Sagalassos (Waelkens/Talloon in press) and the temple of Zeus Kesbelios at Selge (Machatschek/Schwarz 1981, 104–105, 109f.), were converted into churches (cf. Spieser 2001). The privileged topographical position of these sanctuaries within the cities, together with their large size, provided important gathering places for the Christian congregation. Although symbolism and theological considerations may have played some part in locating a church within the city, practical circumstances were undoubtedly predominant (Talloon forthcoming). Christianity also transformed the spatial rhythms of the Pisidian communities through the creation of new reference points within the urban fabric, namely through the construction of district churches in the domestic quarters. This is illustrated at Kremna, where three such churches have been recorded (Mitchell 1995, 219–232), demonstrating a complete domination of the urban landscape by Christianity. Furthermore, the establishment of major churches in the urban periphery, such as the *martyrium* established in the former *stadion* at Sagalassos (Waelkens/Talloon in press) and the sepulchral

churches and monasteries built in the *necropoleis* of Selge (Machatschek/Schwarz 1981, 114–117), exemplify the expanded territory of Christianity (Wharton 1995).

Eventually, by the 6th century a new topography of the sacred, composed of Christian sanctuaries ranging from simple chapels to imposing basilicas, emerged within a transformed urban landscape. However, the establishment of Christianity in the Pisidian cities, reflected in the construction of numerous churches, did not entail a change in the overall plan of the city. The urban lay-out established in antiquity was largely maintained. The addition of churches rather coloured the late antique city by imposing a Christian character upon it.

At this time, Christianity also moved beyond the city walls and, through the networks linking the cities with rural centres, established its grip upon the Pisidian countryside, as manifested in the construction of village churches. Since such churches can only be dated to the later 5th or early 6th century AD (Talloon forthcoming), the countryside evidently lagged behind the Pisidian cities in the degree of Christianization they experienced. Rural communities were converted as part of a wider effort to christianize the countryside organized by the urban-based prelates. Conversion of the rural population is generally held to have been achieved through the activities of intrepid individuals of monastic background (Trombley 1994, 144). Estate-owners also appear to have played an important role in the promotion of Christianity in rural Pisidia (Clark 2001, 275; Talloon forthcoming). Their involvement stemmed from their traditional dominance of rural religious life. Also instrumental was the grant of city-status to 'petty communities' such as Agrai in the territory of Seleukeia (Darrouzès 1981, VII 456. IX 339. X 396 and XIII 403) and Eudokias in the territory of Termessos (Mansi 1757, IV 1225A), in an effort to spread the faith from newly created episcopal seats (Harl 2001, 316).

Conclusion (M. WAELKENS)

The Sagalassos of the late 5th and the first half of the 6th century AD (i.e. during phase 8) was clearly a changing city, ruled by a government with new priorities. Initially, civic authorities or private benefactors still attempted to maintain the city's monumental appearance, even after the town was struck by a severe earthquake during the first half of the 6th century. This is illustrated by the transformation of the bath complex during this period. Evidence from other towns shows that urban institutions such as bath buildings, theatres and *agorai* were usually the first to be 'attacked' by the church, but the evidence from Sagalassos indicates that the bath building was repaired and transformed with a sense of monumentality, and that the parapets of its pools were covered with Christian graffiti. The installation of a public latrine on the ground floor of the Roman Baths demonstrates a continuing concern for urban sanitation, and evidence from test soundings elsewhere in the city indicate that public infrastructure was still well maintained in large parts. However, transformations took place at the same time, as can be seen by the fact that some of the (main) streets were repaired while others appear to have been abandoned or were no longer paved. The organisation of artisanal activity, including that of a metal workshop in the

western portico of the Upper Agora, the former political heart of the town, illustrates a changing attitude toward the maintenance of public areas, some of which were turned into spaces for commercial activities at this time. Gradually, the city assumed a more Christian character, as churches replaced pagan shrines. Evidence from one of the domestic quarters indicates the persistence of a fairly luxurious lifestyle, although parts of the large mansions had clearly been 'ruralized' by this time, possibly in connection with an increase in farming activities in the immediate vicinity of the town. Survey evidence suggests that the entire urban area of 31.5 hectares was still inhabited. On the whole the economy remained sound, even if growing instability resulted in an increase of goat breeding at the expense of cattle husbandry and farming.

Phase 9 of the occupation at Sagalassos was a period of greater transition, during which the city gradually became a town in 'decline', certainly insofar as the maintenance of infrastructure and hygienic conditions were concerned. At this time, Sagalassos was no longer markedly different from large villages in terms of the conditions of life within the town, except for the presence of the older monuments testifying to its former glory. Many large mansions were subdivided, either after they had been completely abandoned by their former owners who had perhaps perished during the plague, or in order to utilise them for producing income through renting parts of the mansions to other families. A combination of factors must have been responsible for the failure of the town to recover as it had formerly managed to do. These probably included the decline of regional trading networks and the decimating effect of the plague of AD 541/42 AD upon the urban and rural population. Literary evidence of drought, leading to poor harvests and famine in various parts of Asia Minor during the 5th and 6th centuries, signs of increased aridity in the territory of Sagalassos, and the study of the urban water network taken together paint a picture of a problematic and reduced water supply during late antiquity, possibly as a consequence of tectonic activity affecting natural water resources. The formerly rich dwellings assumed a much lower status during this period. Encroachment upon public space and the subdivision of grand structures occurred from the 5th century AD onward, but after AD 550 Sagalassos seems to have lost its role as a regional centre, and was probably reduced to a refugee centre with a limited population and a low economic importance. A distinct, wealthy upper class is no longer visible in the city during this period. In the territory settlements also declined in number, suggesting nucleation and an increased emphasis on well protected sites. Again there is no trace of wealthy land owners living in the territory at this point in time, but some nucleated villages flourished and gradually took over economic functions from the former metropolis. Sagalassos therefore became more dependent upon its suburbs for subsistence needs, increasing pressure upon its inhabitants to produce food, and gradually giving the site a more 'rural' appearance.

One can thus conclude that from the middle of the 6th century AD onward, the countryside still prospered to a certain margin and became more independent, while, as a result of a combination of causes that included the plague, the city went through a period of increasing 'decline', even though it was not yet completely cut off from trade routes.

Sagalassos after the Mid 7th Century AD

The City (F. MARTENS/M. WAELEKENS)

During this period, Sagalassos was completely destroyed by an earthquake that had its epicentre near or in the city, and was never rebuilt again (Sintubin et al. 2003; Simillox-Tohon et al. in press). Around the same time the region may have been hit by the first Arab invasions. There are traces of an unsuccessful project to repair the Church of St. Michael which may date from the time of the catastrophe, and also of attempts to rebuild some of the shops in the NE corner of the Upper Agora. Despite these activities, the former city centre was rapidly abandoned, and entirely lost its former function. The Lower Agora was never cleared of earthquake debris. Its western side, where rubble covered the monumental stairway giving access to the square, was used as a burial ground (for victims of the plague?) for one or two generations.

The urban survey has confirmed that the large-scale occupation of Sagalassos entirely ceased after the mid 7th century. A post-7th century AD occupation of the site is again indicated by literary evidence recording a military presence at Sagalassos during the 10th century AD (Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De Thematibus* 1.14.38), and the bishops of Sagalassos continued to be mentioned in the *Notitiae Episcopatum* at least into the 11th century AD, and possibly even later (cf. Belke/Mersich 1990, 368f.; Mitchell 2000, 150). Archaeological evidence supporting these literary testimonies was discovered during the 2002 archaeological survey and the 2003 test soundings: the separately walled promontory of the temple dedicated to Hadrian and Antoninus Pius was indeed occupied during the Middle Byzantine period (9th/10th – 10th/11th century AD), two centuries after the mid 7th century AD earthquake, and probably functioned as a *kastron*. At Alexander's hill, a 12th to 13th century AD Byzantine military occupation was identified. This settlement was destroyed during the late 12th/early 13th century AD by the Turks, who had established themselves in the valley by this time.

It thus remains unclear where the Sagalassian survivors of the earthquake lived for a period of at least two centuries, i.e. from the later 7th to the 9th/10th century. The potential relationship between a possible post-7th century AD occupation and the construction of a rather well built water supply channel upon earthquake rubble along the east side of the Lower Agora needs to be further investigated, together with the layout of the Christian cemetery within the debris on the opposite side of the same square. However, these features need not necessarily be related, and as far as the evidence of the Lower Agora is concerned, no contemporaneous pottery was associated with the installation of the cemetery or the water system.

The Urban Economy (J. POBLOME)

We still have to know more details about the period following the abandonment of the local pottery production units at Sagalassos in the first half of the 7th century AD and the way in which the region evolved after the city's loss of its

central status shortly thereafter. Wares other than local Sagalassos fabrics were already found in the town during the early Byzantine period. The next fixed point in the chronological evolution of pottery in the region is provided by the recent excavations on the so-called Alexander's Hill at Sagalassos, where a 12th/13th century AD pottery assemblage, including Aegean glazed ware, was associated with the destruction level of the Byzantine garrison. The well-targeted re-survey of a selection of sites in 2002 resulted in the identification of several fabrics which may at least partly fill the remaining lacunae in our understanding of the evolution of pottery at the Sagalassos. Three regional fabrics could be assigned to the period between the abandonment of the city and the ceramic assemblage recovered on Alexander's Hill. They predominantly consist of common wares with wide, long strap handles attached to the top part of the rim, applied bands on the shoulder with regularly spaced finger impressions, and flat bases. A few contemporary fragments of Byzantine amphorae were associated with these fabrics, but no imported slipped or glazed table wares, a ceramological pattern which is widely repeated in the contemporaneous Mediterranean. The earliest glazed ware in the region is represented by the red-bodied 'Aegean ware', a couple of sgraffito fragments dated to the 12th/13th century and the assemblage from the Alexander's Hill.

All the early to mid Byzantine local/regional fabrics were sampled with the aim of finding out whether the centuries-old monopoly of the Sagalassos pottery production over the region was replaced by a model of decentralised pottery manufacture on a village or hamlet level that primarily supplied local needs with a range of strictly utilitarian pottery. Occasional contemporaneous amphora sherds attest to some degree of exchange. More work is needed, preferably in conjunction with small-scale excavations, to establish a narrower chronological framework and to determine the date at which the fabrics found on the Alexander's Hill originated and/or to continue this research into the early Ottoman period. These efforts could also provide us with valuable data for the reconstruction of the regional economy in a post-urban environment, and the various roles ceramics played in this evolving socio-cultural context.

The Countryside (H. VANHAVERBEKE)

Post-7th century remains around Sagalassos and its former territory are primarily those of small villages and rural churches [Fig. 12]. A number of locally produced coarse wares seem to have circulated in relatively small regions. Post-early Byzantine material was more plentiful in the valley below the city than on its southern hill slopes. There are indications that present day Ağlasun gradually replaced the former city, as is attested by the remains of richly decorated churches and a mid 13th century AD Turkish bath and caravanserai there.

Pollen records show that during the early to middle Byzantine period (7th–11th century AD) deciduous oak rapidly disappeared from the valley below the abandoned city. There was also a marked decrease in markers for human activity, although at some point a small peak of olive pollen occurred, suggesting that olive culture may have made a brief reappearance. During the same period, the

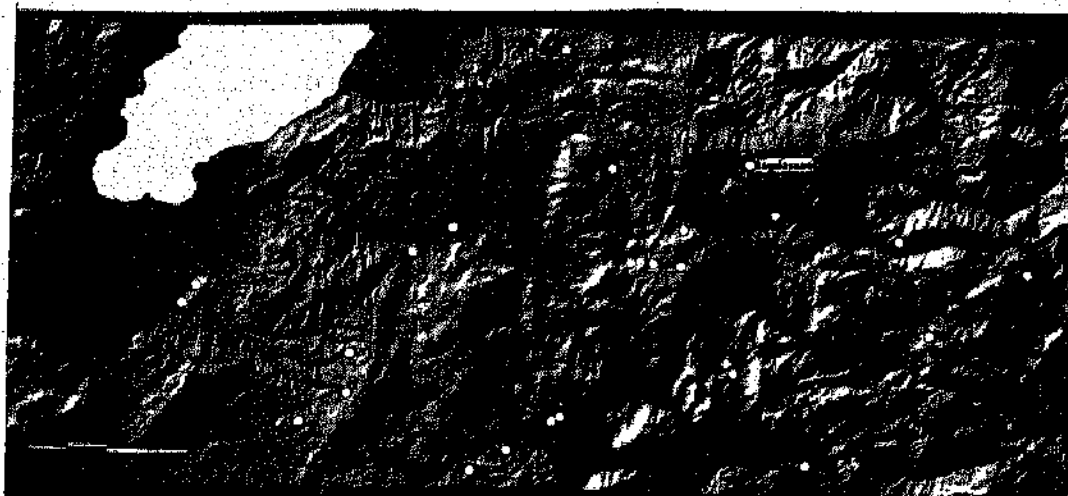


Fig. 12: Map showing the post-7th century AD settlements in the territory of Sagalassos (H. Vanhaverbeke).

basin of Gravgaz, ca. 15 km southwest of the site, was surrounded by scattered patches of deciduous and evergreen oak, although these were gradually cleared, especially toward the end of the period. Long term investments in agriculture, such as olive yards, were given up, but human activity in the valley did not yet come to an end. Indeed, there are traces of cereal cultivation and grazing in the northwest section of the basin. The decrease and gradual disappearance of oak may have been due to anthropogenic causes rather than a colder winter climate, since there is no evidence of the increased cedar and fir growth that should accompany cooler temperatures. The degraded soils were eventually colonised by pine woods. Post-Roman evidence is not yet available for the Başköyovası, but evidence from Çanaklı suggests that the early Byzantine period coincided with the end of olive culture and other signs of cultivation. Deciduous oak disappeared more rapidly near Sagalassos than in the Gravgaz area, possibly as the result of overgrazing (Vermoere 2004).

It thus seems that the early Byzantine survivors of plague, earthquake and Arab invasions abandoned intensive farming, and survived by growing cereals and raising goat and sheep herds. By this they began to deplete the rich vegetation of the late Roman period. Goats may have rapidly eliminated deciduous oaks, which they preferred for browsing. The maintenance of terraces on the valley slopes may have come to an end. These factors combined to accelerate soil degradation through erosion, removing the deeper soils and discouraging the growth of juniper and oak. Degraded upland soils were still suitable for pine, which increasingly replaced the old cedars. By the end of the 1st millennium AD, there seems to have been predominantly pine vegetation in the upper part of the Taurus range, while the areas below gradually became less fertile, degraded soils covered by colluvia. These areas thus had reduced farming potential.

Conclusion (M. WAELENS)

The combination of the 7th century AD Arab invasions with the roughly contemporaneous major earthquake that struck the city and its territory precipitated the end of the old town of Sagalassos. After disappearing from the archaeological record for at least two centuries, the former inhabitants of Sagalassos reappeared at a fortified village sited on the promontory around the temple of the Imperial cult. It is likely that the nearby village of Aglasun replaced the old town to some extent. In any case, life went on in the city's former territory, although on a reduced scale with greater emphasis on a self sufficient economy. This economy relied less upon intensive farming, and more upon growing cereals and breeding smaller animals. Many previously centralised activities (e.g. pottery production) became completely decentralised, resulting in the emergence of different contemporaneous local fabrics. Regional and even international exchange did not come to a complete end, however. But none of the settlements of this time could justifiably be termed a city any longer.

General Conclusion (M. WAELENS)

The ultimate 'decline' of Sagalassos was the result of an interplay of several different factors (cf. Tainter 1990, 187; Bintliff 1997), which eventually reduced the role of an once important town to that of a place of refuge. These factors included: a declining population as a consequence of the plague, together with ensuing social and economic effects, changes in the municipal government precipitated by the disappearance of part of the elite class, external threats manifest in the raids of the Isaurians and Arabs (although these threats may have convinced some people to take refuge in Sagalassos, thereby to some degree compensating for its loss of population), the decline of long distance trade (although fish and other goods from the Levant and Egypt still reached the city during the 7th century AD in reduced quantities) and general insecurity in the form of brigandage and revolts, which arose in the wake of the breakdown of authority and central control. The decline of the municipal structure and the rising importance of the church at Sagalassos are reflected in the changed appearance of the Early Byzantine town. There is no doubt, however, that until the middle of the 6th century AD Sagalassos was still a 'city', albeit with a gradually changing nature.

The 3rd century was prosperous, with a sound economy and thriving municipal life as expressed in the inscriptions, coinage and *agones* of the period. In late Roman times, i.e. during the 4th and the first half of the 5th century, the city maintained its large settlement area, although there may have been a transient nucleation within the new city walls built around AD 400. The subdivision of large structures and encroachment upon public space that began in the earlier 5th century AD was of a commercial nature, and should be interpreted as a sign of economic activity, and not of decline *per se*. There is also evidence for a continuing concern for the repair of older structures during this century, alongside the erection of the first Christian churches. This maintenance and new

construction was most probably the work of the provincial elite, who lived in palatial mansions from which they ruled the city together with the bishop, and who identified themselves with 'the city' in dedications to the Imperial family. Alongside the appearance of Christian iconography in small arts and ceramic production, many pagan themes were present, reinterpreted in a Christian light, and pagan statuary still embellished monuments such as the *nymphaea*. However, some signs of internal and external stress appeared during this period, and may have ultimately been responsible for the abandonment of suburban *villae*, greater dependence on the suburbs for subsistence and a gradual transition from cash crop farming to goat herding. On the whole, however, the wider countryside remained prosperous and densely inhabited.

For the early Byzantine period, a distinction is made between phase 8 of the local pottery (ca. 450/75 – 550/75 AD) and phase 9 (550/75 – 640/75 AD). During phase 8, monumental repair of public structures and the urban infrastructure after the ca. AD 500 earthquake, as well as the construction of several new churches and the repair of rich mansions, indicate the survival of the old civic spirit and the presence of competent municipal institutions represented by the provincial elite and the bishop. The increasing encroachment upon public space after the earthquake should not be seen as a sign of decline, as such encroachment was again of a commercial nature. As the elite slowly gave up living in the countryside, some of the urban villas assumed more rural functions. Overall, the period from the 3rd to the middle of the 6th century AD should be seen as a time of gradual urban 'transformation'. The plague, hitting the town toward the end of this phase, must have had very important demographic, economic and social consequences that became visible during phase 9.

During this latter phase, the city increasingly suffered from water shortages, even though as a refugee city it was less densely inhabited than before. New construction was now solely devoted to religious architecture. The apparent abandonment of systematic waste removal and the subdivision of some of the grand houses into multiple habitation units, whether at the behest of their owners or of other families who had succeeded them, suggest that the provincial elite lost its power and may have disappeared all together. The city remained integrated in trade patterns, but on a much reduced scale. Sagalassos increasingly became an agricultural site, concerned chiefly with subsistence, for which it was more and more dependent on the suburban countryside. The deterioration of hygienic conditions certainly shows a city in decline. Despite the fact that there are almost no signs of a retreat of the former elite from the town to its hinterland, the countryside enjoyed a period of prosperity, characterised by settlement nucleation and decentralisation. Local autonomy increased, bypassing the city. In the 7th century the countryside was also affected by the earthquake and Arab raids, but after this troubled time the village became the effective nucleus of rural settlement, while the city completely disappeared. Economically, the countryside relied on a subsistence form of farming and, increasingly, on pastoralism. These economic activities were further stimulated by the arrival of Turkmen tribes in the 12/13th century AD. Sagalassos itself experienced a precipitous decline after

the middle of the 6th century, a century before its territory underwent a similar but less severe decline in the 7th century AD.

The picture of Sagalassos thus far explored shows the extent to which regional and local events (like earthquakes) played a role in the transformation of Roman settlements in late antiquity. The evidence gathered from Sagalassos and its wider territory clearly demonstrates the importance of an integrated study of both city and *chora*, and of interdisciplinary approaches used for the study of urban and rural sites. This is true not only for Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, but for all periods. However, this picture should not be applied uncritically to the rest of Pisidia or Southwest Anatolia as a whole. Our data should be complemented by excavation, material analysis and intensive survey at other sites in order to draw more general conclusions for the rest of Asia Minor.

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Die lykischen Städte in der Spätantike

WERNER TIETZ (München)

Lykien ist eine vielgestaltige Landschaft [Abb. 1]. Im äußersten Westen befindet sich der Golf von Telmessos (heute Fethiye), wo im Rücken eines schmalen Küstenstreifens, zumeist aus fruchtbarem Schwemmland, eine zerklüftete Bergregion liegt. Von hier führt ein einziger bequemer Landweg ins Tal des Flusses Xanthos, das eine in Nord-Süd-Richtung verlaufende, durchschnittlich etwa 15 km breite Ebene bildet. Es folgt östlich das zentrallykische Bergland, wiederum mit einem schmalen Küstenstreifen, wobei die Höhenzüge Zentrallykiens nicht so zerklüftet und unzugänglich, der Küstenstreifen aber auch nicht so breit wie am Golf von Fethiye sind. Weiter östlich liegen die großen Alluvialebenen von Myra (heute Demre/Kale) und Limyra (heute Finike), die von mehreren Höhenzügen in Nord-Süd-Richtung von der Ostküste abgeschnitten werden. Die dort an einem heute vornehmlich von Feriensiedlungen genutzten Küstenstreifen von beträchtlicher Breite befindlichen antiken Siedlungen Olympos und Phaselis bilden den östlichen Abschluß Lykiens, bevor die Höhenzüge in die pamphyli-sche Ebene übergehen. Die große Ebene von Elmalı in Norden gehört nur noch an den Rand des lykischen Kulturbereichs und wird hier nicht besprochen,¹ ebenso wenig wie die drei ehemals zur kibyratischen Tetrapolis gehörigen Städte Oinoanda, Balbura und Bubon im Nordwesten.

Diese topographische Variantenvielfalt hat in klassischer und hellenistischer Zeit unterschiedliche Siedlungstypen aufkommen lassen, und es wird sich zeigen, daß dies auch für die Entwicklung der Siedlungen in der Spätantike von Bedeutung war. Zunächst bildeten sich im bergigen Hinterland und am Rande des Xanthostales an nur schwer zugänglichen Stellen – meist auf Bergkegeln – mehr oder weniger große Burgsiedlungen.² Diese verfügten in der Regel über eine Akropolis sowie ein ummauertes Siedlungsgebiet, außerdem über Heiligtümer und einen zentralen Platz, auf dem Versammlungen abgehalten werden konnten und wo sich häufig auch die Gräber der örtlichen Elite befanden.³ Von diesen Orten aus wurde ein beträchtliches Umland beherrscht, und sie dienten sicher sowohl in administrativer und religiöser als auch in ökonomischer Hinsicht als

¹ Zu den offensichtlich auch in der Spätantike wie in der Kaiserzeit dicht besiedelten und blühenden Städten und Gemeinden der Elmalı-Ebene s. Harrison 2001, 48–60.

² Die Siedlung Xanthos ist die einzige, die sich mitten in diesem Tal, nicht an seinen Rändern im Kragos- oder Antikragosmassiv befindet. Bezeichnenderweise ist es eben Xanthos, welches als Machtzentrum der archaischen und klassischen Zeit in der Lage war, diese Stelle zu besetzen, ohne dabei ein Risiko einzugehen. Zur Stellung von Xanthos unter den lykischen Dynastensitzen s. Zimmermann 1992, 11–27; Des Courtils 1998, 20–24; Behrwald 2000, 10–22; Des Courtils/Cavalier 2001, 151–156.

³ Thomsen 2002, 141–147.

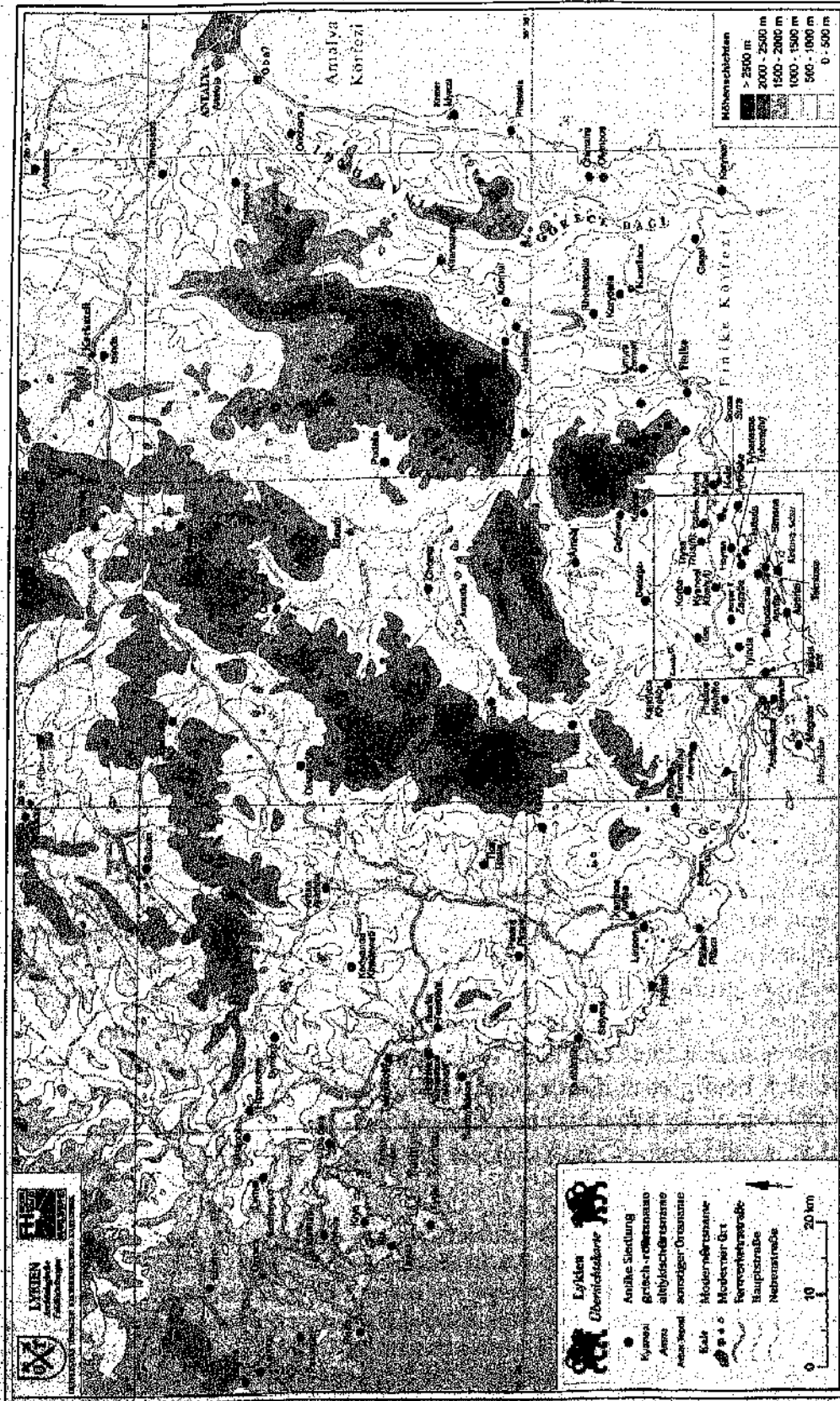


Abb. 1: Die lykische Halbinsel. Übersichtskarte der antiken Siedlungsplätze.

dessen Zentrum. Insofern läßt sich bereits von diesen Burgsiedlungen mit gewissen Einschränkungen als von Kleinstädten sprechen.⁴ Die wichtigsten Zentren dieser Entwicklungsstufe waren – nach heutigem Forschungsstand – neben Xanthos, dem eine Sonderrolle zukommt, Alt-Telmessos (Hızırlik), Tlos, Patara, Phellos, Myra und Limyra. Phaselis an der Ostgrenze Lykiens sei von dieser Untersuchung ausgenommen, da es zwar in Lykien liegt, als griechische Kolonie aber eine gänzlich andere Entwicklung durchlief als die eigentlich lykischen Orte.⁵

Die intensiv ab dem ausgehenden 5. Jh. v.Chr.⁶ einsetzende Hellenisierung Lykiens trieb auch die Entwicklung urbaner Zentren voran. Der fortifikatorische Aspekt trat dabei immer mehr in den Hintergrund. Zwar wurden weiterhin Siedlungsmauern errichtet bzw. ausgebessert und die Akropoleis sogar verstärkt, doch der Schwerpunkt der neuen Siedlungstätigkeit verlagerte sich allmählich von den unzugänglichen Bergkuppen an die Küste.⁷ Fortan lagen einige der bedeutendsten lykischen Städte unmittelbar am Meer, und ihre Prosperität wurde vor allem durch ihren Hafen gewährleistet.⁸ Als Orte besonderen Wachstums treten in dieser Zeit die Küstenorte Telmessos, Patara, Antiphellos, Myra und Limyra hervor, während die Binnenorte wie Xanthos, Patara und Tlos vermutlich stagnierten oder sich zumindest ihre Entwicklung langsamer vollzog als die der Küstenorte. Als Lykien im Jahr 43 zur römischen Provinz wurde, besaßen jedoch all diese Städte eine urbane Ausstattung von beachtlicher Qualität, und auch die Binnenorte als die ‚Zulieferer‘ der großen Häfen⁹ erfuhren eine Blüte und eine Erweiterung der eigenen Bausubstanz durch Theater, Gymnasien, Stöen und andere öffentliche Bauten.¹⁰ In der Kaiserzeit und mit der *Pax Romana* verstärkte sich diese Entwicklung noch¹¹, unter anderem durch die Lage Lykiens an der Transportroute für ägyptisches Getreide nach Rom¹² und durch ein verstärktes

⁴ Von den bei Kolb 1984, 15 formulierten Kriterien für eine Stadt im siedlungsgeographischen Sinne sind die Geschlossenheit in topographischer und administrativer Hinsicht, die mannigfaltige Bausubstanz, die soziale Differenzierung und die Funktion als Zentralort für ein Umland als erfüllt zu betrachten. Das Kriterium der Arbeitsteilung ist nur eingeschränkt überprüfbar, ebenso der urbane Lebensstil, wobei sich von all dem Spuren finden. Der einzige negative Befund ergibt sich bei der Frage nach einer Einwohnerzahl von deutlich mehr als 1000 Personen; vgl. Thomsen 2002, 406–409.

⁵ Zu Gründung und Anlage von Phaselis s. E. Kalinka in TAM II p. 414f.

⁶ Jahreszahlen sind, wenn nicht anders vermerkt, als ‚n.Chr.‘ zu verstehen.

⁷ Zu diesem Phänomen s. Tietz 2003, 132 mit Anm. 79 (dort weiterführende Literatur).

⁸ Zimmermann 2000, 335f.; Zimmermann 2003.

⁹ Vgl. etwa die Rolle des zentrallykischen Hafens Timiussa für die Binnenorte Kyaneai und Tyberissos; Zimmermann 2000, 335.

¹⁰ So verfügen 16 der 21 bei Wurster 1996, 173 aufgelisteten lykischen Städte über ein Theater, sechs über ein Odeion und neun über eine, drei (bei Wurster zwei – Tlos und Aperlai –, doch Kyaneai besitzt zwei Bäder, nicht eines) über zwei und zwei – Patara und Arykanda – sogar über drei Thermenanlagen.

¹¹ Wurster 1996 passim.

¹² Die großen hadrianischen Granarien von Patara und Andriake belegen die wichtige Funktion der beiden wohl bedeutendsten lykischen Häfen als Zwischenlager auch in der Spätantike; Foss 1996 I, 15–17; Isik 2000, 142–145; Harrison 2001, 80; vgl. Claude 1969, 85.

Auftreten regionaler Euergeten um die Mitte des 2. Jhs.,¹³ und so finden wir die lykischen Städte vor allem an der Küste,¹⁴ aber auch im Binnenland im 3. Jh. als funktionierende, dicht bebaute, wohlhabende und urbanistisch gut ausgestattete Orte.¹⁵ Das verbreitete Bild allenthalben prosperierender kaiserzeitlicher Städte läßt sich somit auch auf Lykien übertragen. Zuweilen ist im 3./4. Jh. von Räubern aus dem Norden bzw. Nordosten zu hören, die insbesondere nordlykische Landstriche unsicher machten,¹⁶ ebenso von germanischen Überfällen von der See aus.¹⁷ Wesentliche Auswirkungen auf das Funktionieren städtischen Lebens hätten diese ‚Nadelstiche‘ aber offenbar nicht.

Erst mit dem einsetzenden 4. Jh. lassen sich scheinbar Defizite im städtischen Leben Kleinasien erkennen, welche auf das byzantinische Mittelalter vorausweisen könnten.¹⁸ Insbesondere J.H.W.G. LIEBESCHUETZ vertritt jüngst wieder die Ansicht, die klassische antike Stadt habe bereits vor dem 7. Jh. im Zuge des Aufkommens des Christentums und durch den Niedergang des Kurialenstandes und den damit verbundenen Wegfall der Funktion der Städte als selbstverwaltete, effiziente Grundeinheiten des Römischen Reiches und des kompetitiven Euergetismus auf dem Bausektor viel von ihrer Urbanität verloren.¹⁹ Von diesen Erscheinungen und ihrem Ausmaß soll nun die Rede sein.

Die Grundlage für die folgenden Erwägungen bilden vor allem archäologische Ergebnisse der Grabungen und Oberflächenforschungen, die an zahlreichen lykischen Orten vorgenommen wurden.²⁰ Spätantike Inschriften sind nur in sehr geringer Zahl erhalten. Die herausragende literarische Quelle bildet die Vita des heiligen Nikolaos von Sion (gestorben 564) – im Folgenden kurz VNS – die wohl im letzten Drittel des 6. Jhs. von einem Zeitzeugen aus dem Umfeld des Heiligen verfaßt wurde.²¹ Diese Heiligenbiographie gibt vor allem über das Territorium von Myra in Zentrallykien Aufschluß, das viele Weiler, Dörfer, Kirchen und Klöster besaß, aber auch über die Metropole Myra selbst erfahren wir einiges. Die VNS darf wohl zumindest für das lykische Kerngebiet vom Xanthostal bis nach Limyra als repräsentativ gelten.

¹³ Zimmermann 1992 passim; Foss 1996 I, 18.

¹⁴ Foss 1996 I, 15. Noch im 3. Jh. n.Chr. finden sich z.B. im Hafenort Timiussa Gräber von Personen, die aus allen Teilen des östlichen Mittelmeerraumes stammten, sogar aus dem campanischen Puteoli; Zimmermann 2000, 338 mit Anm. 6.

¹⁵ Die allgemeine Einschätzung der lykischen Küste als im 3. Jh. n.Chr. blühende Region bei Foss 1996 I, 16, Zimmermann 2000, 339 mit Anm. 7.

¹⁶ BCH 1886 Nr. 6 (Oinoanda). Mitchell 1993 I, 234f.; Foss 1996 I, 15; Zimmermann 1996; Adak 2003, 11.

¹⁷ Orac. Sibyll. 13, 139f.; Zos. 1, 69. 4, 20.

¹⁸ Jüngere Vertreter einer solchen Bewertung der Spätantike in Kleinasien sind z.B. Whitton 2001; Liebeschuetz 2001.

¹⁹ Liebeschuetz 2001, 31f.; vgl. Jones 1964 passim; Mitchell 1993 II, 120f.

²⁰ Die Ergebnisse der Oberflächenuntersuchungen im Siedlungszentrum der zentrallykischen Polis Kyaneai werden demnächst in einer zusammenfassenden Gemeinschaftspublikation vorliegen, hrsg. v. F. Kolb, Asia Minor Studien (in Vorbereitung). Zu allen Aussagen über Kyaneai s. in Kürze den Beitrag des Autors in diesem Band.

²¹ Zu Datierung und Autorschaft s. Blum 1994, 52f.; Blum 1997, 7f.

Es ist nicht zuletzt die unzulängliche Quellensituation, die manche der interessanten Fragen bezüglich der lykischen Städte nicht zuläßt, so etwa die nach der Entwicklung der städtischen Eliten oder nach dem Übergang vom klassischen Euergetismus zur christlich motivierten Spendertätigkeit. Zur Sprache kommen sollen dagegen die Fragen nach eventuell im Gefolge der religiösen Transformation durch das Christentum entstandenen Unruhen, nach dem Erhalt bzw. Verlust der innerstädtischen Verwaltung, nach dem Ausmaß der öffentlichen Baulätigkeit und schließlich nach der ökonomischen und demographischen Entwicklung der lykischen Städte.

Religiöse Transformation

Die wohl wichtigste Veränderung, die sich in den lykischen Städten der Spätantike vollzog, war die Verdrängung der paganen Religionen durch das Christentum. Eine Inschrift aus Arykanda von 311/312 bezieht sich auf eine vorausgegangene Forderung der Einwohner Lykiens und Pamphyliens nach einem kaiserlichen Einschreiten gegen aufrührerische Christen, was wohl belegt, daß die Christen zu diesem Zeitpunkt noch eine Minorität der Bürger bildeten.²² In der Folgezeit setzte sich das Christentum langsam und zumindest bis ins 6. Jh. längst nicht vollständig durch. Noch um 550 zieht der heilige Abt Nikolaos von Sion durch die Dörfer in der Umgebung seines Klosters bei Myra und beseitigt Reste paganen Glaubens mit dem Ziel der Missionierung.²³ Es muß also bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt mit einer beträchtlichen Anzahl von Nicht-Christen in Lykien gerechnet werden. Bezeichnend ist hierbei auch das Verhalten des Heiligen selbst, der sich bei diesen Besuchen durch das ‚Spenden‘ von Rindern zum Verzehr nach Form und Inhalt ganz im Rahmen des antiken Euergetismus bewegt.²⁴

Hierokles kennt in der Zeit unter Iustinian (527–565) 34 Bischofssitze in der Provinz Lykia.²⁵ Die meisten von ihnen können ohne Probleme identifiziert werden. Es handelt sich überwiegend um die alten urbanen Zentren, die also auch unter christlichen Vorzeichen ihre religiöse Zentralortfunktion beibehielten. Daneben allerdings findet auf dem Lande ein Konzentrationsprozeß des religiösen

²² TAM II 784; dazu Des Courtils 1998, 62. Das entsprechende Reskript ist in Arykanda nur fragmentarisch, im pisidischen Kolbasa jedoch nahezu vollständig erhalten (s. Mitchell 1988). Hierin gibt Maximinus Daia den Bewohnern der Städte Lykiens und Pamphyliens freie Hand, Vertreibungen von Christen vorzunehmen, falls diese bei ihrem Glauben bleiben.

²³ VNS 6 gibt den Auftrag zur Mission wieder, VNS 15–19 berichtet vom Kampf gegen einen paganen Dämonen, der sich in einem Baum versteckt hält; vgl. dazu jeweils Blum 1997, Blum 1994, 61f. merkt jedoch sicher zu Recht an, daß auch der ländliche Raum in der Mitte des 6. Jhs. bereits weitgehend christianisiert gewesen sein dürfte. Zur (recht geringen) Rolle des Mönchtums bei der Missionierung: Mitchell 1993 II, 117–119.

²⁴ Zur charakteristischen Sprachwahl bei der Beschreibung der Spenden in der VNS und zu kaiserzeitlichen Parallelen s. Robert 1955, 199f. mit Anm. 7.

²⁵ Hierocl. Synecd. 684.

Lebens statt, der mit der geänderten ländlichen Siedlungsstruktur zusammenhängt. In den nun zahlreichen, großen Dörfern (s.u.) werden zum Teil gewaltige Kirchen errichtet, die ein Vielfaches der Einwohnerzahl dieser Siedlungen fassen, mithin auch Bewohnern umliegender Dörfer dienen.²⁶

Auch im baulichen Bestand der Städte spiegelt sich die religiöse Transformation und der Reichtum der lykischen Städte vor allem in den zahlreichen Kirchen, zumal in großen Basiliken, die sich in nahezu jedem größeren Ort, nicht nur in den Poliszentren, finden [Abb. 3 und 4].²⁷ Damit einher ging eine andere Entwicklung im baulichen Bereich. Im Laufe des 4. Jhs. und verstärkt im 5. sowie noch im 6. Jh. wurden in Lykien wie überall in Kleinasien, teilweise unter der Führung des örtlichen Bischofs, pagane Tempel beseitigt und zuweilen durch Kirchen ersetzt, entweder an gleicher Stelle oder zumindest auf einem angrenzenden Grundstück.²⁸ Daß es dabei zu größeren Unruhen gekommen wäre, ist jedoch nicht bekannt.

Das Christentum brachte mit seinen zahlreichen und immer neu aufkommenden Glaubensrichtungen insbesondere den Städten des Ostens einigen Konfliktstoff.²⁹ Ein weiterer Unruheherd war der nachlassende Einfluß der östlichen Episkopalkirche gegenüber den Klöstern, der ein Charakteristikum der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit war und sich in Kleinasien bereits in der Spätantike beobachten läßt.³⁰ Für Lykien ist diese Entwicklung aufgrund der schmalen Quellenbasis nicht nachvollziehbar, nur zu erraten. Wenn jedoch im 6. Jh. der Abt Nikolaos von Sion einer Vorladung bzw. Verhaftung durch den Metropolit von Myra, der vom ebenfalls in Myra ansässigen Statthalter unterstützt wird, nicht folgt und

²⁶ Şanlı-Erlor 2004 nennt für das Territorium von Kyaneai 29 Kirchen, verteilt auf 23 Siedlungen. Fünf dieser Siedlungen weisen große Basiliken auf. 44 in frühbyzantinischer Zeit nach Ausweis der Oberflächenkeramik bewohnte Siedlungen besaßen hingegen keine Kirche.

²⁷ Die großen Kirchenbauten der lykischen Städte sind großteils noch nicht hinreichend publiziert; vgl. Foss 1996 II, 15; Isik 2000, 13, 30f. 41f. 78–80, 100–102 (Patara), Zimmermann 2000, 339 (Timiussa), Des Courtis/Cavalier 2001, 166–169 (Xanthos). Das kleine Kyaneai besaß drei Basiliken, Limyra mindestens zwei (Jacobek 1993, 112–115). Zu Kirchen in der Chora Foss 1996 I, 19 (Myra), Şanlı-Erlor 2004 (Kyaneai).

²⁸ Claude 1969, 69–71; Jacobek 1993, 111; Foss 1996 I, 23, II, 38; vgl. Liebeschuetz 2001, 260–269. Die prominentesten lykischen Beispiele hierfür sind das Letoon, das ehemalige Hauptheiligtum des Lykischen Bundes, das im 6. Jh. eine große Basilika erhielt (Foss 1996 I, 21; Harrison 2001, 4), obwohl es dort keine Siedlung gab, und der von dem heiligen Bischof Nikolaos im 4. Jh. zerstörte Tempel der Artemis Eleuthera von Myra (nach TAM II 905 XIX A 10–12 im 2. Jh. n.Chr. „unter den Bauwerken in Lykien das schönste und größte“; vgl. Harrison 2001, 5). Es lassen sich jedoch noch zahlreiche weitere Beispiele anführen, so in Kyaneai der Tempel der Eleuthera sowie ein kleineres Heiligtum auf der Akropolis (Kirche F: Kupke 1995, 314); außerdem z.B. die Hafenbasilika von Patara (Isik 2000, 79) und eine große Basilika auf der „römischen Akropolis“ von Xanthos (Foss 1996 I, 20). Es scheint, als seien die meisten der großen lykischen Basiliken, die sich außerhalb des Siedlungskernes einer Stadt befinden und bei denen es sich nicht um Märtyrerkirchen handelt, Nachfolgebauten paganer Tempel.

²⁹ Zu den häufig äußerst brutalen Auseinandersetzungen s. Liebeschuetz 2001, 257–260.

³⁰ Mitchell 1993 II, 114f.; Liebeschuetz 2001, 291.

ungeschoren davonkommt, zeigt sich darin zumindest eine starke Stellung des Abtes gegenüber seinem kirchlichen Dienstherrn.³¹

In einen Zusammenhang mit innerkirchlichen Zwistigkeiten könnte der Streit um den Bau einer Marienkirche in Pinara fallen, der von dem neu eingesetzten Bischof Nikolaos von Sion vorgeschlagen wurde. Die VNS berichtet, der heilige Abt habe drei Jahre nach seiner zusätzlichen Investitur als Bischof von Pinara infolge einer Marienepiphanie beschlossen, in Pinara eine Marienkirche zu errichten, und dies sei auf den Widerstand der örtlichen Amtsträger und des Klerus gestoßen. Diese gaben ihre ablehnende Haltung nach Aussage des Biographen auf, als Nikolaos den vorgesehenen Baugrund aus eigenen Mitteln erwarb und die Kirche ebenso auf eigene Kosten errichtete. Danach verließ der heilige Abt Pinara offenbar für immer.³²

Eigentlicher Gegenstand des Streites ist jedoch möglicherweise nicht vorrangig die Frage der Finanzierung³³ sondern die des Patroziniums. Auch nach dem Konzil von Chalkedon (451) könnte das lykische Mönchtum und mit ihm wohl Nikolaos von Sion tatsächlich zum Monophysitismus geneigt haben, wohingegen die Bischöfe im Allgemeinen der Orthodoxie angehörten.³⁴ Konflikte zwischen Monophysiten und Chalkedonianern sind für den Osten des Mittelmeerraumes im 6. Jh. gut belegt, und auch an der kleinasiatischen Südküste gab es noch unter Iustinian christliche Gruppen, die das Konzil von Chalkedon ablehnten.³⁵ Es wäre daher durchaus denkbar, daß sich der Streit um den Bau ausgerechnet einer Marienkirche durch einen zum Bischof gewordenen Vertreter des Mönchtums an diesen Differenzen entzündete, denn mit der Feststellung der Gottesgleichheit Jesu war in Chalkedon Maria als Gottesmutter (*theotokos*) anerkannt worden. Nikolaos, möglicherweise beeinflusst durch das alexandrinische Mönchtum, könnte eine andere Namensgebung im Auge gehabt und so den Unwillen der Pinarensen hervorgerufen haben.

Die VNS, die aus dem Umfeld des Nikolaos stammt, nennt Maria erst im Zusammenhang mit der fertiggestellten Kirche tatsächlich zweimal Gottesmutter, während zuvor nur von der ‚Mutter unseres Herrn Jesus Christus‘ die Rede war.³⁶ Sollte die Nachgiebigkeit des Nikolaos in Wirklichkeit darin bestanden

³¹ VNS 53; zur kirchendisziplinarischen Unterordnung der Äbte unter den jeweiligen Bischof s. Blum 1997, 115. Daß der Abt sich nicht vor seinem Metropoliten verantworten muß, geht m.E. aus dem in VNS 53 folgenden Fest der Dorfbewohner im Umfeld des Kloster hervor, das sich aufgrund des Kontextes kaum anders denn als Dankesfest für die abgewendete Verhaftung betrachten läßt; Zimmermann 1992, 102f. mit Anm. 10. Dagegen Blum 1994, 57; Blum 1997, 10f., der in der Folge der älteren Literatur zwischen beiden Kapiteln einen erzählerischen Bruch erkennen will, was m.E. eine grundlose Annahme ist (vgl. die bei Zimmermann a.O. genannten Argumente). Foss 1996 III, 308, 321 vermutet, der Gedanke hinter der Erhebung des Heiligen zum Bischof von Pinara (VNS 68f.) sei es gewesen, ihn besser unter Kontrolle halten zu können.

³² VNS 69.

³³ So Blum 1997, 19f.

³⁴ Harrison 1963, 120; Jacobek 1990, 100. Dagegen weist Blum 1994, 63 mit Anm. 89; Blum 1997, 17 darauf hin, daß hierfür keine eindeutigen Belege vorliegen.

³⁵ Jones 1964, 968 mit Anm. 68; Liebeschuetz 2001, 257–269 u.ä.

³⁶ Alle Belege in VNS 69.

und er die Pinarenser dadurch überzeugt haben, daß er sich schließlich beim Patrozinium der Marienkirche nach der Orthodoxie richtete und die Kirche der Maria *theotokos* weihte?³⁷ Bedauerlicherweise taucht Maria sonst in der VNS nicht auf, so daß Belege für diesen Verdacht nicht zu liefern sind.

Es ist jedoch auffällig, daß sich nicht nur die Amtsträger Pinaras, sondern auch die dortigen Kleriker gegen die Pläne des Kirchenbaus wenden, die vermutlich sogar von einer neuen Kirche profitiert hätten. H. BLUM verweist zwar auf Nov. Iust. 67,2 als möglichen Stein des Anstoßes, wonach eine Kirche seitens der öffentlichen Hand mit den für ihren Unterhalt erforderlichen Mitteln auszustatten war. Das tatsächliche Problem allerdings wird nach der Schilderung der VNS durch den Bau der Kirche auf Kosten des Nikolaos beseitigt, der für den Unterhalt seiner Gründung aber keinerlei Mittel bereitstellt. BLUMS Vermutung, die 400 *solidi*, welche Nikolaos selbst für den Bau der Kirche aufbrachte, seien teilweise zur Besoldung der anzustellenden Kleriker verwendet worden,³⁸ findet keine Stütze im Text. Es ist lediglich von der *ekbasis* der Kirche die Rede, die mit 400 *solidi* bezahlt wurde. Auch die Nennung der abschließenden Summe aller Kosten deutet eher nicht auf eine Ausstattung von Klerikern. Es stellt sich die Frage, warum eine zusätzliche Spende, etwa in Form einer Stiftung, hätte verschwiegen werden sollen. Die Härte der Regelung aus Nov. Iust. 67,2 für die Bewohner von Pinara wurde also durch das Zugeständnis des neuen Bischofs keineswegs abgeschwächt, und fällt damit als Konfliktgrund aus.

Munizipale Ordnung und Urbanistik

Das Funktionieren der munizipalen Ordnung in den lykischen Städten kann aufgrund des nahezu völligen Fehlens von Inschriften und lokalen Münzprägungen aus der Spätantike nicht überprüft werden. Literarische Quellen wiederum geben keine Hinweise auf die Verhältnisse speziell in Lykien, mit der Ausnahme Myras, das in der VNS den Eindruck eines funktionierenden religiösen und politischen Provinzialzentrums vermittelt, und Pinaras, wo die VNS nicht näher definierte „Amtsträger“ (*politeuomenoi*) erwähnt.³⁹

Informationen über das säkulare öffentliche Leben der übrigen Städte lassen sich am ehesten aus der Bautätigkeit gewinnen. Überall in den lykischen Städten findet offensichtlich ein grundlegender Umbau statt. Die Wohnbebauung wird neu konzipiert, qualitätvolle Stadtmauern errichtet, es entstehen neue, teilweise noch nicht einzuordnende Typen öffentlicher Gebäude, während bestehende Anlagen umgebaut bzw. instandgehalten werden. All dies deutet auf eine funktionierende Infrastruktur hin, kann aber vorläufig noch kaum interpretiert werden.

³⁷ Ebenfalls etwa in das 6. Jh. gehört wohl die Kirche der Maria *theotokos* im zentrallykischen Kyaneai: Kolb 1991, 575f.; Zimmermann 1992, 77.

³⁸ Blum 1997, 19f. Von „Verteilungskämpfen“ (so Blum 1994, 66; Blum 1997, 20) berichtet die VNS nichts.

³⁹ Zu Myra s.u. Die *politeuomenoi* Pinaras in VNS 69 dürften dem Kreis der Kurialen entstammen: Blum 1997, 114.

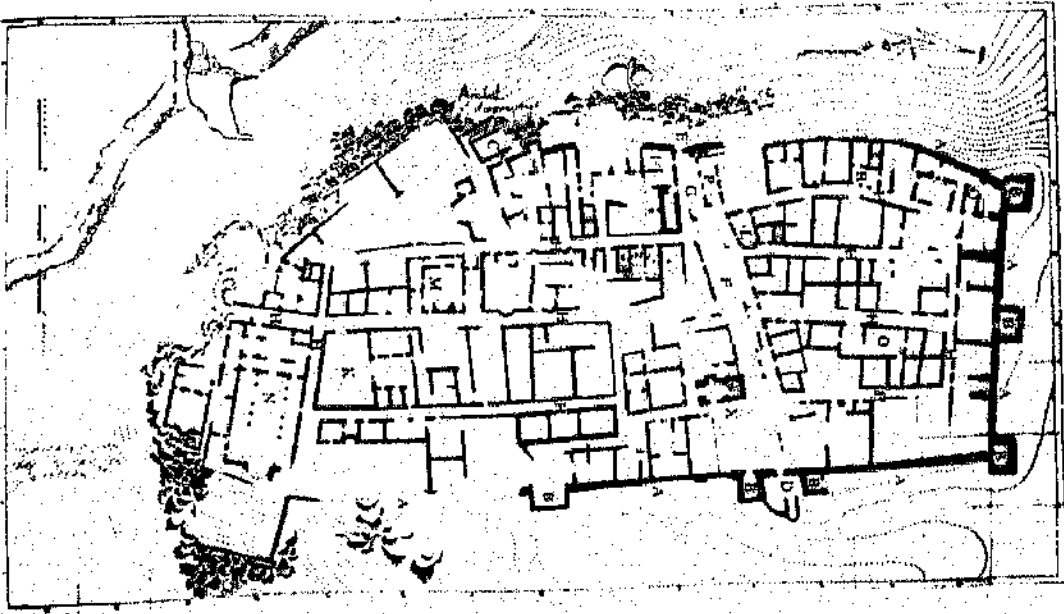


Abb. 2: Stadtplan der spätantiken Siedlung bei Arif (aus: M. Harrison, *Mountain and Plain, From the Lycian Coast to the Phrygian Plateau in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Period*, Ann Arbor 2001, 41 Fig. 30).

da sich dieser Epoche lykischer Städte bislang zu wenige Untersuchungen gewidmet haben.

Bis vor kurzem gab es in Lykien kaum Hinweise darauf, daß auch in spätantiker/frühbyzantinischer Zeit eine Bautätigkeit stattfand, die sich öffentlichen Profanbauten widmete. Zwar wurden, wie gesehen, zahlreiche und prachtvolle Kirchen errichtet, jedoch scheinbar kaum neue öffentliche Gebäude wie sie in der Kaiserzeit zur Grundausstattung auch der kleinsten Poliszentren gehört hatten, wie etwa Odeia – meist auch als Bouleuterion genutzt –, Thermen und Theater. Dies wird zuweilen als Hinweis darauf verstanden, daß in der Spätantike (spätestens seit dem 4. Jh.) die politische und kulturelle Infrastruktur immer mehr verfiel.⁴⁰ Allerdings deutet einiges darauf hin, daß hier eine Forschungslücke zu irrigen Schlußfolgerungen geführt hat. Tatsächlich ist es insbesondere schwierig festzustellen und wurde dementsprechend noch kaum untersucht, in welchem

⁴⁰ So Harrison 2001, 7, allerdings mit der Einschränkung, man könne für die lykischen Städte dennoch hohen Wohlstand und eine beträchtliche Bevölkerung aus den zahlreichen Kirchen- und Klosterbauten erschließen. Das klarste Beispiel für eine solche blühende Stadt ohne bedeutende Profanbauten und Plätze ist eine Siedlung auf der Insel Gemile Adası in der Nähe des heutigen Oludeniz mit einigen korrespondierenden Anlagen auf einer Nachbarinsel und an der Küste: Tsuji 1995 passim; Foss 1996 I, 23. II, 6–9. Diese Siedlung wurde nach Ausweis der Oberflächenkeramik gegen Ende des 6. oder im frühen 7. Jh. völlig verlassen: Tsuji 1995 passim.

Maße kaiserzeitliche öffentliche Gebäude in der Spätantike weiterbenutzt wurden. Es lassen sich jedoch durchaus Belege dafür finden, daß diese und andere öffentliche Bauten und die zugehörigen Platzanlagen gepflegt und nötigenfalls ausgebessert wurden, und dies nicht nur in der Provinzhauptstadt, sondern auch in den lykischen Kleinstädten.⁴¹

Teilweise kam es sogar zu umfangreichen Neubauprogrammen. Ein gutes Beispiel hierfür ist neben dem zentrallykischen Hafenort Timiussa⁴² die kleine byzantinische Siedlung nahe des türkischen Dörfchens Arif bei Arykanda [Abb. 2]. Diese wurde im 5./6. Jh. angelegt und verfügt über zwei Thermen sowie eine kleine Platzanlage, obwohl sie von nur wenigen hundert Menschen bewohnt war (s.u.). Wenn selbst eine derart kleine Siedlung über urbane Elemente verfügte, können wir diese getrost für die bedeutenden Zentren Lykiens voraussetzen. Daß – abgesehen von der Siedlung bei Arif und einigen anderen – kaum spätantike/byzantinische Neubauten öffentlicher profaner Gebäude bekannt geworden sind, dürfte daran liegen, daß die Stadtzentren bereits mit öffentlichen Gebäuden von exzellenter Bausubstanz besetzt waren, die man eher ausbesserte als daß man sie abriß, um an ihrer Stelle neue zu errichten.⁴³ Ein strukturelles Defizit der lykischen Städte bestand in dieser Hinsicht jedenfalls nicht.

Auf dem Gebiet der Münzprägung ging der alte Polischarakter in Lykien bereits im 3. Jh. verloren. An den Bronzeemissionen des Gordian III. und der Tranquillina nahmen in Lykien in den Jahren 242/44 noch 20 lykische Poleis teil – ebenso viele wie an den lykischen Bundesprägungen des 1. Jhs. v.Chr.⁴⁴ Darunter befinden sich solche, die noch nie oder bereits seit langem keine Münzen emittiert hatten, und es fällt auf, daß einige der wichtigsten hellenistischen Zentren, wie z.B. Xanthos, Telmessos, Sidyma und Pinara, nicht mehr beteiligt sind. Eine zufriedenstellende Deutung dieses Phänomens steht jedoch noch aus.⁴⁵

Die Existenz einer Oligarchie von Landbesitzern, deren Entwicklung LIEBESCHUETZ als Folge politischer Desintegration der Kurialenschicht bereits in die Spätantike datiert,⁴⁶ wird durch den archäologischen Befund für Lykien klar zurückgewiesen. Bei keiner der an zahlreichen Orten durchgeführten Oberflächenuntersuchungen in der Chora lykischer Poleis fand sich auch nur ein Land-

⁴¹ Die Wasserzuleitung der Kleinen Thermen von Kyaneai z.B. wurde noch in der Spätantike ausgebessert. Vgl. allgemein zum Weiterbetrieb kaiserzeitlicher Bäder in frühbyzantinischer Zeit Claude 1969, 78–85. Zu den Platzanlagen s. ebenda 60–63. Vgl. Liebeschuetz 2001, 34–39, der zumindest in den großen urbanen Zentren wie Ephesos und Aphrodisias ein Fortbestehen der Monumentalität beobachtet.

⁴² Timiussa erhielt in der Spätantike eine völlig neue Ausstattung mit öffentlichen Gebäuden, deren Funktion größtenteils noch nicht bestimmt werden kann: Zimmermann 2003.

⁴³ Daß es jedoch auch diesen Fall wohl gab, zeigt eine iustinianische Novelle (Nov. 15, 5, 2), in der verfügt wird, daß den *defensores civitatis* Amtgebäude zur Verfügung zu stellen seien; dazu Claude 1969, 84, 117. Zu den Verwaltungsgebäuden der Provinzialverwaltung s. ebenda 81–84. Zum gut belegten Neubau bzw. zur Instandhaltung von Thermen im 6. Jh. s. ebenda 78–81.

⁴⁴ von Aulock 1974; Troxell 1982, 39.

⁴⁵ von Aulock 1974, eine Übersicht ebenda 23; Fowden 1990, 368; Tietz 2003, 321.

⁴⁶ Liebeschuetz 2001, 405 u.ö.

sitz, der als ‚Residenz‘ eines solchen Landbesitzers in Frage käme. In den städtischen Zentren dagegen entstehen in spätantiker/frühbyzantinischer Zeit repräsentative Häuser. In Kyaneai können z.B. sieben in dieser Epoche genutzte Wohnhäuser nachgewiesen werden, die sechs und mehr Räume besitzen. Von diesen wurden drei neu errichtet, während an vieren Erweiterungen stattfanden.

Die Funktion der Städte als politisches Zentrum ihres Umlandes blieb mithin vermutlich uneingeschränkt erhalten. Hinweise darauf, daß die ländlichen Siedlungen im Gegensatz zu den Städten in der Spätantike an Bedeutung zugenommen hätten,⁴⁷ finden sich in Lykien jedenfalls nicht. Zwar bilden sich auf dem Land große dörfliche Zentren, doch geht dies keineswegs auf Kosten der Städte. Im spätantiken/frühbyzantinischen Lykien läßt sich vielmehr beobachten, daß die ländliche Siedlungsform sich ändert und ein Konzentrationsprozeß der Bevölkerung stattfindet. Zahlreiche neue, wohlhabende Dörfer entstehen, während das Einzelgehöft in der Spätantike mehr und mehr seine Stelle als vorrangige agrarische Wohnform verliert, die es während der Kaiserzeit noch besessen hatte (s.u.). Dieser Prozeß ist also von der politischen und demographischen Entwicklung der Städte ganz zu trennen; große, reiche Dörfer bedeuten nicht eine Gefährdung der städtischen Zentralortfunktion, sondern deuten im Gegenteil sogar auf den Grund für das Aufblühen der Städte, die ja großteils von der Landwirtschaft abhingen.

Wirtschaftliche Organisation

Es herrscht Übereinstimmung darüber, daß die lykischen Städte bis ins späte 6. Jh. eine Epoche wirtschaftlicher Blüte erlebten.⁴⁸ Sie dürften auch in wirtschaftlicher Hinsicht ihre Zentralortfunktion behalten haben. Zumindest läßt sich sagen, daß sie immer noch Orte mit ausgeprägter Arbeitsteilung waren, wo sich spezialisierte Handwerker ansiedelten.⁴⁹ Als weiterer Beleg für eine soziale Ausdiffe-

⁴⁷ So Liebeschuetz 2001, 291.

⁴⁸ Vgl. z.B. Kolb 1991; Foss 1996 I–III; Liebeschuetz 2001, 42. Die Einschränkung bei Liebeschuetz, dies betreffe lediglich Küstenstädte und „areas with reasonably easy communications with the coast“ schließt sehr wenige lykische Gebiete aus, da nahezu alle Regionen Lykiens über eine gute Verbindung zum Meer verfügten.

⁴⁹ VNS 19: Zur Weiterbearbeitung eines besonders großen Baumes sucht der heilige Nikolaos von Sion im Zentralort Myra nach Handwerkern, offensichtlich da es in dem Dorf, wo der Baum gefällt wurde, keine geeigneten Arbeitskräfte gab, obwohl dort über 300 Menschen lebten (s.u. Anm. 100). Als sich auch in Myra kein Spezialist findet, richtet Nikolaos einen Aufruf an alle (wohl: zentrallykischen) *poleis*. Handwerker erwartete man also zunächst in den Zentralsiedlungen. Daß Nikolaos fünf Zimmerleute schließlich nicht in einer Stadt sondern in einer *Karkabioton kome* findet, spielt hierbei keine Rolle. Daß Handwerker vor allem in den Poliszentren lebten, zeigen auch VNS 39, wo sich Steinmetze in Arneai versammeln, und I. Arykanda 129. 314 (= TAM II 821), die jeweils einen *tekon* in Arykanda nennen. Als die Perser im 7. Jh. nach Anatolien einfielen, deportierten sie aus den Städten neben der Oberschicht vorzugsweise Handwerker: Claude 1969, 166 (mit einer Liste der Quellen). Claude 1969, 167–170 spricht von einem Konzentrationsprozeß von Handel und Handwerk in den Städten ab dem 4. Jh.

renzung und einen gewissen Grad an Arbeitsteilung in den lykischen Städten des 6. Jhs. ist anzusehen, daß sie in Hinblick auf Nahrungsmittel vorrangig Konsumentenstädte waren. Dies zeigt der Ausbruch von Lebensmittelknappheit in Myra, als die Bauern des Umlandes wegen einer Epidemie nicht mehr in die Stadt kommen,⁵⁰ ein Vorgang, der bei einer Ackerbürgerstadt nicht zu verzeichnen wäre. Die Bewohner Myras dürften also nur zu einem sehr geringen Teil mit den Bearbeitern der landwirtschaftlichen Betriebe im Umland identisch gewesen sein. Es bestanden mithin Abhängigkeiten zwischen der Stadt- und der Landbevölkerung, die nicht stark genug waren, die Bauern zum Besuch der infizierten Stadt zu veranlassen. In Frage kommen hierbei vor allem wirtschaftliche und rechtliche Beziehungen. Das erstere ließe auf ein spezialisiertes Handwerk in der Stadt schließen, das letztere auf eine Oberschicht, die im Zentralort den urbanen Lebensstil suchte. Vermutlich handelt es sich um eine Mischung aus beidem, und so sind zwei der oben genannten Kriterien für die Existenz einer Siedlung mit städtischem Charakter erfüllt.

Für eine Beurteilung der lokalen Wirtschaft, von der die meisten Städte abhingen, kann das gut erforschte Umland Kyaneais als Beispiel dienen. Der in diesem kleinen städtischen Zentrum ebenso wie im Umland insbesondere anhand prächtig ausgestatteter Kirchen, aber auch qualitätvollen Wohnbauten greifbare Wohlstand in der Spätantike fällt auch gegenüber früheren Epochen auf. Die landwirtschaftlich nutzbare Anbaufläche wurde indes nicht gesteigert. Der bescheidene Reichtum insbesondere der dörflichen Siedlungen dürfte wohl auf die Einführung technischer Neuerungen wie Preßgewichte und große Mahlsteine zurückzuführen sein, mit denen die Produktion gesteigert werden konnte.⁵¹

Als weiterer Faktor beim Verfall der Städte im spätantiken Lykien wird häufig ein Niedergang des überregionalen Handels angenommen, der seinen Grund teilweise in der Verlandung der Häfen, aber auch in Piraterie und Krankheit gehabt habe.⁵² Diese Risiken waren in der Tat beträchtlich (s.u.). Der Fernhandel kam jedoch auch in der Spätantike alles anders als zum Erliegen, vielmehr vermitteln die – zugegebenermaßen wenigen – Quellen bis weit ins 6. Jh. ein Bild ungebrochener Blüte.⁵³ Nikolaos von Sion hat bei seinen Reisen nach Jerusalem stets Glück und findet an der zentrallykischen Küste Schiffe, die ihn ins Heilige Land bringen; dasselbe gilt für seine Rückreisen.⁵⁴ Es handelt sich bei diesen um

⁵⁰ VNS 52. Vgl. Brandes 1989, 98. An knappen Waren werden genannt: Brot, Mehl, Wein und Brennholz, sowie pauschal „Lebensmittel“. Die Erwähnung von Mehl und Wein entspricht dem archäologischen Befund, wonach Getreide in den Dörfern gemahlen und Wein ebenfalls auf dem Land gepreßt wurde: Şanlı-Erler 2004.

⁵¹ Şanlı-Erler 2004.

⁵² Brandes 1989, 181–188; Harrison 2001, 7; Whittow 2001; Liebeschuetz 2001, 52–54.

⁵³ Vgl. Claude 1969, 170–176; Blum 1994, 60.

⁵⁴ VNS 8 liegt ein Schiff aus Askalon in Andriake, dem Hafenort von Myra, VNS 27 ein ägyptisches Schiff in Timiussa, dessen Zielhafen Askalon ist, mit einem Zwischenstop im Nil-delta. VNS 36 findet der Heilige in Askalon, wo reger Schiffsverkehr herrscht, ein rhodisches Schiff, das über Rhodos nach Konstantinopel fährt und ihn bis Lykien mitnimmt. VNS 39 berichtet von einer weiteren Reise nach Jerusalem, ohne auf die Transportbedingungen einzugehen. Vgl. Foss 1996 I, 20. II, 25 zum Fortbestehen des Handelsverkehrs mit Ägypten. Zur regen

Schiffe in Privatbesitz mit fernen Zielen, und auch wenn es nicht völlig sicher ist, daß Handelsschiffe gemeint sind, kommt doch kaum etwas anderes in Frage. Die beiden wichtigsten Häfen Zentrallykiens sind Tristomo (das frühere Timiussa) und Andriake.⁵⁵ Naturgemäß profitierten vom Fernhandel vor allem die Küstenstädte, doch auch die Binnenorte in ihrer Funktion als Lieferanten von Rohstoffen, vor allem von Holz.⁵⁶

Die Münzprägung und die Zirkulation von Münzgeld in den lykischen Städten der Spätantike sind kaum zu beurteilen. Eigene Prägungen lykischer Städte finden seit der Mitte des 3. Jhs. nicht mehr statt, und die Publikationen von Münzfunden aus den großen Grabungen in Lykien stehen noch aus. Was bisher bekannt ist, spricht indes stark dafür, daß der Kleingeldumlauf in der Spätantike keineswegs zusammenbrach, sondern vielmehr einen Höhepunkt erreichte.⁵⁷ Das Fehlen entsprechender Funde an den meisten lykischen Siedlungsplätzen ist daher wohl auf den Forschungsstand zurückzuführen und läßt zumindest keine Rückschlüsse auf eine negative wirtschaftliche Situation Lykiens in der Spätantike zu.

Demographische Entwicklung

Wie LIEBESCHUETZ zu Recht anmerkt, ist die bloße Einwohnerzahl einer Stadt von ihrer Einstufung als Ausdruck einer klassisch urbanen Lebensform zu trennen.⁵⁸ Die demographische Entwicklung einer Stadt ist gleichwohl das am schwersten wiegende Kriterium für ihre Einstufung als urbanes Zentrum und der wichtigste Indikator für ihre Blüte bzw. ihren Niedergang.

Viele der spätantiken lykischen Städte lassen sich auch nach dem heutigen, in mancher Hinsicht unzureichenden Forschungsstand auf diesen Aspekt hin untersuchen. Nicht im einzelnen unanfechtbare, doch in ihrer Gesamtheit eindeutige Hinweise auf eine hohe Bevölkerungsdichte in den Städten wie auch auf dem Land geben die vielen frühbyzantinischen Basiliken, denen eine große Bevölkerung entsprochen haben muß [Abb. 4].⁵⁹ Die Siedlungszentren selbst zeigen im

Schiffahrt an der lykischen Küste in der Spätantike s. Brandes 1989, 97; Foss 1996 III, 315f. 324f.

⁵⁵ VNS 37f.; s. auch die vorangehenden Anmerkungen. Zu den ausgedehnten spätantiken Ruinen Andriakes und Timiussas, darunter große Lagerhäuser, s. Tsuji 1995, 44; Foss 1996 II, 24f. III, 315f.; Zimmermann 2000, 339.

⁵⁶ Brandes 1989, 56; Foss 1996 I, 20. II, 1. Zum spätantiken Salzfishhandel in Timiussa s. Zimmermann 2003.

⁵⁷ Foss 1996 I, 21. Die beim Survey des Tübinger Lykien-Projektes in der zentrallykischen Kleinstadt Kyaneai gefundenen Münzen setzen auch in der Spätantike nicht aus. So wurden auch mehrere Münzen des 4./5. Jhs. gefunden, deutlich mehr als kaiserzeitliche und nahezu ebenso viele wie hellenistische. Es handelt sich bei diesen Fundmünzen jedoch fast ausschließlich um Streufunde, die keine Aussagen über tatsächliche Quantitäten zulassen: Tietz (in Vorbereitung).

⁵⁸ Liebeschuetz 2001, 40.

⁵⁹ Zu städtischen Basiliken s.o. Anm. 28f.; daß es auch im ländlichen Raum zahlreiche Kirchen gab (und dementsprechend florierende ländliche Gemeinden), zeigt sich z.B. auf dem

Osten des spätrömischen Reiches eine unterschiedliche Entwicklung: Teils nimmt ihre Einwohnerzahl ab, teils nimmt sie zu, doch im Durchschnitt scheint ihre Bevölkerung im Vergleich zur Kaiserzeit etwa gleich groß geblieben zu sein.⁶⁰

Leider hat keine einzige lykische Stadt auch nur annähernd vollständig ergrabene Wohnbezirke vorzuweisen;⁶¹ was ergraben ist, vermittelt allerdings den Eindruck großen Wohlstands.⁶² Daher sind die entscheidenden Hinweise auf die demographische Entwicklung der lykischen Städte vor allem anhand des Umfangs der jeweiligen Siedlungsmauer zu gewinnen. Bei diesem Kriterium ist jedoch Vorsicht geboten. Die von D. CLAUDE aufgestellte Liste von sechs nachgewiesenen Möglichkeiten der Befestigung einer frühbyzantinischen Stadt (bis hin zum völligen Fehlen von Mauern)⁶³ zeigt, daß ein verkleinerter Mauerring nicht gleichbedeutend mit einer verkleinerten Bevölkerung sein muß. Insbesondere ist mit ausgedehnten Vorstädten zu rechnen.⁶⁴ Hingegen darf wohl ein erweiterter Mauerring als Beleg für eine gewachsene Bevölkerung gelten.

Die *pax Romana* hatte in der Hohen Kaiserzeit Stadtmauern in Lykien weitgehend überflüssig gemacht. Auch die Goteneinfälle des 3. Jhs. berührten die Region kaum (s.o.),⁶⁵ und die dortigen Städte erlebten bis zum Beginn des 7. Jhs. eine von auswärtigen Feinden weitgehend ungetrübte Friedensperiode.⁶⁶ In Kleinasien wurden lediglich in Regionen Stadtmauern errichtet bzw. instandgesetzt, die an das Taurusgebirge grenzten, von wo aus isaurische Stämme und schlichte Bergräuber immer wieder Überfälle starteten. Zu diesen bedrohten Regionen zählte neben dem besonders gefährdeten Pamphylien auch Lykien.⁶⁷

Die Beobachtung des Prozesses, in dem das ummauerte Gebiet der Städte in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit schrumpfte und man daher auf einen Bevölkerungsrückgang schließen kann,⁶⁸ läßt sich nicht auf die spätantiken Verhältnisse übertragen. In dieser Zeit gibt es vor 500 m.E. kaum eine in der Kaiserzeit bedeutende

Gebiet von Kyaneai (s.o. Anm. 28) und in der gerade in spätantik-byzantinischer Zeit am dichtesten bebauten Region um den Golf von Fethiye (Tsuji 1995; Tietz 2003).

⁶⁰ Claude 1969, 15–25. 39f.

⁶¹ Dieses Forschungsdefizit gilt – von wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen – für Kleinasien allgemein: Liebeschuetz 2001, 46–51.

⁶² Zu Xanthos, besonders zur Bebauung der ‚lykischen Akropolis‘ s. Foss 1996 I, 20; 64–73; Des Courtils 1998, 20–24.

⁶³ Claude 1969, 41.

⁶⁴ Claude 1969, 30–35; so auch Liebeschuetz 2001, 51. Die lykischen Orte sind in dieser Hinsicht noch unzureichend untersucht. Einzig in Limyra (s.u.) und Kyaneai sind bislang ausgedehnte spätantike Bauten im *suburbium* nachgewiesen worden.

⁶⁵ Im 3. Jh. wurden vor allem Städte an der kleinasiatischen West- und Nordküste mit neuen Stadtmauern umgeben. Diese Mauern hatten etwa denselben Umfang wie ältere Vorgängerbefestigungen: Foss/Winfield 1986, 126. 284 Abb. 2.

⁶⁶ Foss/Winfield 1986, 129; Foss 1996 II, 2.

⁶⁷ Brandes 1989, 46; Fowden 1990, 368f.; Hellenkemper/Hild 1993, 34–39. 41f.; Tsuji 1995, 43 mit Anm. 4; Foss 1996 I, 24. Bei den betreffenden Informationen ist allerdings fraglich, ob sie lediglich die nordöstlichen Randbezirke oder auch das Kernland Lykiens im Süden betrafen.

⁶⁸ Liebeschuetz 2001, 292.

lykische Stadt, deren Siedlungsgebiet aufgrund eines drastischen Bevölkerungsrückganges geschrumpft wäre.⁶⁹

Einen Sonderfall bildet Arykanda, nördlich von Limyra an dem wichtigen Verkehrsweg in die Ebene von Elmah gelegen. Das kaiserzeitliche Siedlungszentrum bekam im 6. Jh. in weniger als einem Kilometer Entfernung einen ‚Nachbarn‘. Dabei handelt es sich um eine kompakte, nur ca. 2,5 ha große Siedlung von wenig mehr als 400 Einwohnern,⁷⁰ die über einige städtische Aspekte verfügt, so über mehrere Kirchen – darunter eine große Basilika –, zwei Thermen, eine kleine Platzanlage und eine starke Ummauerung mit Toren und Türmen [Abb. 2]. Das Mauerwerk dieser Siedlung ist einheitlich aus Mörtel und Bruchsteinen errichtet; nur vereinzelt finden sich auch Spolien kaiserzeitlicher Gebäude. Die Siedlung verfügt über ein regelmäßiges Straßensystem, und es ist offensichtlich, daß sie in einem Zuge errichtet wurde. Die Gründe für ihre Anlage sind unklar. Daß sie auf Kosten der alten Zentralsiedlung angelegt wurde, ist m.E. nicht sehr wahrscheinlich. Sie bietet gegenüber dieser keine fortifikatorischen Vorteile, eher im Gegenteil,⁷¹ und es steht außer Frage, daß das alte Poliszentrum auch im 5. und 6. Jh. durchgehend besiedelt wurde.⁷² Weshalb nur für einen Teil der Einwohner Arykandas diese Siedlung angelegt worden sein sollte, ist m.E. kaum zu erklären, zumal sie im 6. oder frühen 7. Jh. wieder vollständig aufgelassen wurde.⁷³ Näher liegt es, hier eine Ansiedlung von Zugewanderten zu vermuten.

⁶⁹ Der Ausnahmefall ist allenfalls Pinara, das seine größte Ausdehnung in der Kaiserzeit erreichte. Hier könnte der Schrumpfungsprozeß aufgrund von Abwanderung bereits im 3. Jh. eingesetzt haben: Wurster/Wörle 1978, 97f.; Wurster 1980, 30f. mit Abb. 1; Foss 1996 III, 320f.; Harrison 2001, 3. Brandes 1989, 199 dagegen datiert die Verkleinerung „nach dem 6. Jh.“. Auch der kleine Bergort Tyberissos in Zentrallykien erlebte bereits in der Spätantike seinen Niedergang (Zimmermann 2003), und auch andere, abseits der großen Landstraßen gelegene, ehemalige Burgsiedlungen auf schwer zugänglichen Bergkegeln traf dieses Schicksal.

Die ‚Justinianische‘ Mauer von Patara aus dem 6. Jh. umfaßt lediglich einen Teil des kaiserzeitlichen Siedlungsgebietes. Zwei der wichtigsten Basiliken der Stadt liegen außerhalb dieser Mauer, vermutlich wurde sie also erst spät im 6. Jh. erbaut (Isik 2000, 105f., vgl. Brandes 1989, 101), also nach der ‚Pest‘ von 541/2 (dazu und zu den damit verbundenen Bevölkerungsverlusten s.u.). Die Verkleinerung des ummauerten Siedlungsareals ist daher möglicherweise nicht auf reines Schutzbedürfnis (so Isik ebenda), sondern vielmehr auf eine tatsächlich wesentlich kleinere Bevölkerung zurückzuführen. Völlig klar ist dies jedoch nicht, denn im *suburbium* byzantinischer Städte befanden sich häufig große Basiliken, insbesondere Märtyrerkirchen (Claude 1969, 30f.) und Nachfolgebauten paganer Tempel (s.o. Anm. 29).

⁷⁰ Zu dieser Siedlung vgl. auch im Folgenden Brandes 1989, 119; Harrison 2001, 39–46. Die Schätzung von 1000 Einwohnern bei Foss 1996 I, 24 ist angesichts der geringen Zahl der Wohnhäuser sicher zu hoch gegriffen.

⁷¹ An ihrem Westende wird die Siedlung zwar durch den Steilabfall zum Fluß Arykandos bestens geschützt, sie liegt jedoch an einem recht steilen Hang, was den Zugang und den Beschuß für Feinde, insbesondere von der hangseitigen Ostflanke, erleichtert hätte. Auch das kaiserzeitliche Arykanda verfügte über eine Stadtmauer und war so aufgrund seiner vorteilhaften Lage wesentlich besser geschützt.

⁷² Hierauf deuten die große, aufwendig gebaute Basilika sowie einige christliche Inschriften (TAM II 821–823; I. Arykanda 310–315).

⁷³ Brandes 1989, 119 rechnet bereits für die Zeit der Anlage dieser Siedlung mit einem der-

Weitergehende Aussagen sind freilich auch mit dieser These nicht möglich, so etwa ob es sich um Polisbürger aus möglicherweise bedrohten Teilen des Territoriums von Arykanda handelte oder um eine kleine Kolonie von Fremden.⁷⁴

Im Falle Limyras [Abb. 3] ließe sich vermuten, daß die frühbyzantinische Kernstadt wesentlich kleiner als die antike war, denn die ins 5./6. Jh. datierbare Mauer dieser ‚Ost-Stadt‘, deren Ausstattung mit Kirchen ebenfalls ins 5./6. Jh. gehört,⁷⁵ umfaßt kaum ein Drittel des ehemaligen Siedlungsgebietes. Auch außerhalb dieser Mauer, in der erst in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit ummauerten ‚West-Stadt‘, wurde im 6. Jh. gebaut, wie dortige, mit Mosaiken reich ausgestattete Bauten um das Kenotaph des Gaius Caesar zeigen.⁷⁶ Daß im Falle Limyras ein Verkleinerungsprozeß stattfand, ist dennoch nicht auszuschließen. Dieser wäre jedoch – falls er sich vor der großen Pest von 541/2 vollzog – eher auf die Verlagerung der Hauptsiedlung an den Küstenort Phoinix zurückzuführen, der später auch Limyras Rolle als Bischofssitz übernahm,⁷⁷ als auf eine negative Bilanz der Gesamtbevölkerung des Territoriums.

Die Liste der lykischen Städte, die noch zu Beginn des 6. Jhs. nachweislich ihre kaiserzeitliche Ausdehnung bewahrten oder ihr Siedlungsgebiet sogar erweiterten, ist lang und soll hier nicht im Einzelnen durchgegangen werden. Genannt seien nur einige.⁷⁸ Zu den Orten mit einem etwa gleichgebliebenen Siedlungsareal gehören Olympos,⁷⁹ Tlos,⁸⁰ Kandyba⁸¹ und Arneai,⁸² erweitern konnten ihre Fläche bzw. Bevölkerungszahl vermutlich Sidyma,⁸³ Aperlai,⁸⁴ Timiussa,⁸⁵ Xanthos⁸⁶ und Telmessos.⁸⁷

artigen Bevölkerungsrückgang, daß alle Bewohner Arykandas umgezogen sein könnten. Harrison 2001, 39 sieht die Möglichkeit, es könnte die übrige Bevölkerung Arykandas an einen dritten Ort gezogen sein.

⁷⁴ Borchhardt 1975, 57 vermutet eine ursprünglich militärische Ansiedlung.

⁷⁵ Jacobek 1993, 112f.

⁷⁶ Jacobek 1993, 113f.; Foss 1996 II, 39 (mit einer Datierung dieser Bauten ins 6. Jh.).

⁷⁷ Jacobek 1993, 111. Zur großen Bedeutung von Phoinix als Hafenort in der Spätantike s. Foss 1996 II, 39–41; III, 323.

⁷⁸ Eine kursorische Darstellung des beachtlichen Ruinenbestands zahlreicher kleinerer Orte in Zentrallykien aus dem 5./6. Jh. bietet Harrison 2001, 8–38; s. auch Foss 1996 passim.

⁷⁹ Foss 1996 II, 42f.; Adak 2003, 11, 78–86.

⁸⁰ Wurster 1976, 29, 37 mit Abb. 8.

⁸¹ Ebenda 45f. 48 mit Abb. 20.

⁸² Foss 1996 III, 318f.

⁸³ Wurster 1980, 32.

⁸⁴ Foss 1996 II, 17f. vermutet m.E. zu Recht, daß der Ort in der Spätantike erst seine größte Blüte erlebte.

⁸⁵ Zimmermann 2003.

⁸⁶ Brandes 1989, 98f.; Foss 1996 I, 20, II, 2, 9–11. Dichte Bebauung und Kanalisation auf Akropolis: Des Courtills 1998, 64–73; Des Courtills/Cavalier 2001, 164–169.

⁸⁷ Für eine Erweiterung des Siedlungsgebietes spricht die Inbesitznahme der Insel Makra in der telmessischen Hafeneinfahrt. Ob das ursprüngliche Siedlungsgebiet während dieses Vorgangs ebenfalls vollständig besiedelt blieb, ist jedoch unklar: Tietz 2003, 299, 341f. 352f. mit der älteren Literatur. Zum ausgedehnten Ruinenbestand um den Golf von Fethiye und auf den dortigen Inseln s. ebenda passim. Vgl. Foss 1996 II, 5f.



Abb. 4: Kernbereich des Siedlungsareals von Kyaneai (mit Kirchen A bis F).



Abb. 5: Ummauertes Siedlungsareal von Kyaneai um 100 n.Chr. (grau) und um 600 n.Chr. (grau + dunkelgrau).

Eine klare Aussage läßt sich über Myra treffen. Seine seit dem 4. Jh. belegte Stellung als Provinzhauptstadt und Metropolitansitz, also als politisches und kirchliches Zentrum Lykiens, läßt erwarten, daß die Stadt in der Spätantike nicht nur an Bedeutung, sondern auch an Größe und Einwohnerzahl gewann.⁸⁸ Das Funktionieren seines Hafenortes Andriake in der Spätantike und die Anbindung des dortigen Granariums aus hadrianischer Zeit an die Getreideproduktion im Hinterland von Myra zeigt sich durch einen am Granarium angebrachten Brief des für die *annona* zuständigen *praefectus praetorio* Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus von 388–392.⁸⁹ Darüber hinaus liegen Hinweise vor, daß die Stadtmauer um die Mitte des 5. Jhs. erweitert und die Stadt nach einem verheerenden Erdbeben im

⁸⁸ Malalas 14, 24, p. 364f.; VNS 6. 8. 19, 52f. 58, 68. Claude 1969, 191f. schätzt, daß alleine von der Provinzialverwaltung am Statthaltersitz 200–350 Menschen gelebt haben. Eine nicht viel geringere Zahl ist wohl auch für die Kleriker und Bediensteten um den Metropolitensitz zu veranschlagen (vgl. Foss 1996 II, 27f.).

⁸⁹ Borchhardt 1975, 50f. (Beitrag M. Wörle). Inhalt des Schreibens ist die Verschickung von Standardhöhlmaßen, und zwar nicht nur an Myra, sondern auch an Arneai im Hinterland.

Jahre 529 aufwendig wiederaufgebaut wurde.⁹⁰ Aus archäologischer Sicht ist Myra allerdings problematisch, da die Stadt nicht ergraben wurde und bis auf das Theater, eine Thermenanlage und die Nikolaoskirche unter mehrere Meter dickem Alluvium verborgen liegt.

Als besonders deutlicher Fall sei noch Kyaneai in Zentrallykien hervorgehoben [Abb. 4 und 5]. In dieser mit ca. 4,5 ha ummauerter Fläche und einem ca. 1,5 ha großen besiedelten *suburbium* verhältnismäßig kleinen Siedlung, die auch Bischofssitz war, wurden in frühbyzantinischer Zeit nicht weniger als drei große Basiliken angelegt.⁹¹ Vor allem aber wurde bei der Anlage einer Siedlungsmauer im 5./6. Jh. das ummauerte Stadtgebiet wesentlich erweitert.⁹² Man begnügte sich nicht damit, schlicht die hellenistische Mauer instand zu setzen. Vielmehr wurden mächtige Aufschüttungen vorgenommen, die Siedlungsmauer an mehreren Stellen vorgeschoben und so das Siedlungsgebiet innerhalb der Mauern um etwa ein Viertel vergrößert.⁹³ Auch die drei großen Basiliken der Stadt sprechen für eine beträchtliche Bevölkerung. Läßt sich die große Kirche A in der Nekropole noch als Märtyrerkirche deuten,⁹⁴ so gilt dies für die beiden anderen nicht. Hinzu kommt die große Dichte der Bebauung, nicht nur inner- sondern im Süden und Südwesten auch außerhalb der Mauern.⁹⁵ Die Häuser sind hier wie dort eng aneinandergelagert. Dies und ihre Ausführung in sauberer meist verputzter Mörtelbruchsteintechnik läßt auf eine dicht besiedelte Stadt im 5./6. Jh. schließen. Ein weiterer Hinweis darauf, daß das Areal innerhalb der Mauern tatsächlich vollständig besiedelt war, ergibt sich aus der Verteilung der – freilich teilweise nicht datierbaren – fünf Kirchen B-F, die so im Stadtgebiet liegen, daß sie sämtliche Regionen abdecken⁹⁶.

Lediglich am Rande sei vermerkt, daß auch die ländliche Bevölkerung im Vergleich zu früheren Epochen in frühbyzantinischer Zeit eher zugenommen zu haben scheint und die Siedlungsdichte auf dem Land zweifellos hoch war. Dabei

⁹⁰ Erweiterung der Stadtmauer unter Markian (450–457): AP 15, 2. Wiederaufbau nach dem Erdbeben: Malalas 18, 40, p. 448.

⁹¹ Die Basilika an der Agora wurde von einem Bischof namens Synesios der Jungfrau Maria *theotokos* geweiht (Publikation der Bauinschrift in Vorbereitung durch C. Schuler), also nach dem Konzil von Ephesos im Jahre 431; Zimmermann 1992, 77 mit Anm. 102.

⁹² Die bei Kolb 1991, 570f. mit Abb. 10 beschriebene Verkleinerung des Stadtgebietes fand nach Ausweis des Mauerwerks der entsprechenden Befestigung, wo große Ziegelstücke als Fugenausgleich dienen, erst in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit statt. Kolb setzt als Datierung für die spätantike Stadtmauer ebd. 572 ein Datum „nicht vor dem 3. Jh. n. Chr.“ an. Dies läßt sich nun präzisieren, da für die Mauer auch ein mit Profil und Lorbeerblattstab reich geschmückter Block eines Tempels oder Grabhauses verwendet wurde. Mehrere solcher Blöcke mit exakt denselben Abmessungen finden sich auch in die große Basilika Kirche A verbaut. Setzt man wegen der größeren Zahl der verwendeten Bauteile voraus, daß das Gebäude zunächst für den Kirchenbau aufgelassen wurde, so ist die Kirche älter als die Stadtmauer, womit für den Zeitpunkt des Mauerbaus wohl erst das 5. Jh. in Frage kommt.

⁹³ Foss 1996 II, 20.

⁹⁴ Kolb 1991, 579 mit einer Datierung spätestens um 500.

⁹⁵ Ebd.

⁹⁶ Diese Beobachtung erstmals bei Kolb 1991, 574.

ist ein Konzentrationsprozeß zu beobachten: Gab es auf dem Territorium des zentrallykischen Kyaneai in der Kaiserzeit noch ca. 280 genutzte Einzelgehöfte, sind für die Spätantike lediglich 82 nachweisbar.⁹⁷ Die Zahl der dörflichen Siedlungen stieg dagegen von 55 in der Kaiserzeit auf 67 in der Spätantike.⁹⁸ Das Territorium Kyaneais vermittelt so den Eindruck einer dicht besiedelten, wohlhabenden Landschaft.⁹⁹ Für das Territorium von Myra liegt in der VNS ein einzigartiger Beleg vor, der in dieselbe Richtung weist. Das überwiegend ländliche Betätigungsfeld des heiligen Abtes zeigt zahlreiche Dörfer mit teilweise mehreren hundert Einwohnern.¹⁰⁰ Es fand auch kein *demographic shift* von der Küste ins Binnenland statt.¹⁰¹ Die VNS beschreibt zwar aufgrund ihrer Ansiedlung im Binnenland vor allem das rege Leben auf dem Land, gibt aber durchaus auch Hinweise auf eine Blüte der Küstenregionen.

Alles in allem läßt sich sagen, daß weder in den lykischen Städten der Spätantike noch in ihrem Umland im Vergleich zu früheren Epochen eine Reduktion der Siedlungsdichte stattgefunden haben dürfte. Ein möglicher Grund hierfür könnte neben den erwähnten technischen Neuerungen vor allem die große verkehrsgeographische und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung Lykiens am wohl wichtigsten Seeweg (auch für die *annona*) im östlichen Mittelmeer gewesen sein.

Eine in ihren Auswirkungen auf die demographische Entwicklung Lykiens – Küstenregion und Binnenland – differenziert zu bewertende Größe bildet die verheerende, aus Ägypten nach Kleinasien eingeschleppte Pest von 541/42, welche große Teile Anatoliens erfaßt zu haben scheint und insbesondere die Hauptstadt Konstantinopel hart traf.¹⁰² Sie wird häufig in einem Atemzug mit den Perser- und Arabereinfällen des 7. Jhs. herangezogen, um den Niedergang der lykischen Städte zu begründen und so den Beginn des Niedergangs der Städte

⁹⁷ Hailer 2004.

⁹⁸ Şanlı-Erler 2004. Von diesen 67 Siedlungen wurden 18 neu angelegt, während sechs aufgelassen wurden. Bei diesen letzteren handelt es sich um Siedlungen, die abseits der großen Verkehrswege lagen, während die neuen an bereits zuvor bewirtschafteten Ebenen entstanden. In mittelbyzantinischer Zeit ist ein drastischer Rückgang der dörflichen Siedlungen auf nur noch 30 zu beobachten: ebd.

⁹⁹ Foss 1996 II, 21f.; Şanlı-Erler 2004. Ob mit der Konzentration der ländlichen Bevölkerung in Dörfern auch ein demographisches Wachstum verbunden war, ist ungewiß.

¹⁰⁰ VNS 16 (300 Bewohner des Dorfes Plakoma sehen zu, wie Nikolaos einen Baum fällt, in dem sich ein ' unreiner ' Geist aufhält). 39 (75 Männer des Dorfes Tragalassos versuchen, einen riesigen Felsblock zu bewegen). 55 (200 Sitzplätze bei einer öffentlichen Speisung im Dorf Plenion). In diesen drei Fällen dürften weitere Bewohner hinzuzurechnen sein: Kinder, Kranke und Greise, in Kapitel 39 sämtliche Frauen. Vgl. Blum 1994, 59–61; Foss 1996 II, 29; Blum 1997, 13f. Zu den drei von Blum genannten Beispielen treten noch VNS 22f. und 58. Hier verfügt jeweils eine einzige *kome* über mehrere Kleriker. Auch sonst bieten die Schilderungen dörflichen Lebens in der VNS mit 35 Dörfern und Klöstern häufig das Bild regen dörflichen Lebens. Die spätantiken Siedlungen auf dem Territorium von Kyaneai zeigen die größte Zahl an Wohnhäusern aller Epochen (bis zu 18): Şanlı-Erler 2004.

¹⁰¹ So die Hypothese von Harrison 1977; dagegen Blum 1994, 60f.; Blum 1997, 14. Fowden 1990, 369 ff. m.E., wenn er einen Qualitätsunterschied zwischen Gebäuden an der Küste und im Binnenland konstatiert und Harrison's These dadurch unterstützt sieht.

¹⁰² Mit medizinischen Details und weiterführender Literatur Meier 2003, 324f.

Lykiens bereits in die Zeit vor den in der Tat verheerenden Perser- und Araberkriegen zu verlegen.¹⁰³ Bei dieser Pest handelte es sich zweifellos um ein Ereignis überregionaler Bedeutung, das in Kleinasien hohe Verluste unter der Bevölkerung hervorrief, wobei sich die Schätzungen in einem Rahmen zwischen einem Viertel und einem Drittel der Gesamtbevölkerung bewegen.¹⁰⁴ Dabei steht außer Frage, daß die Verluste in den Hafenstädten mit vermutlich 50% wesentlich höher waren als die im Binnenland. Daß dies der Wahrheit entspricht, zeigt sich in der VNS, wo berichtet wird, die Stadt Myra sei von den Bewohnern des Umlandes gemieden worden, da diese sich so vor der in der Stadt ausgebrochenen Seuche schützen wollten; daher seien keine Lebensmittel in die Stadt gelangt, und zusätzlich zu der Pest sei auch noch eine Hungernot ausgebrochen.¹⁰⁵ Die Seuche brach also in Myra aus, während das Umland zunächst verschont blieb. Diese Seuche war mithin über das Meer nach Myra gekommen, und es liegt daher nahe, sie mit der aus Ägypten stammenden und über die großen Handelsrouten bis nach Konstantinopel verbreiteten Pest zu identifizieren.¹⁰⁶ Dieser Befund und das Verhalten der Bewohner des Umlandes bestätigen, was sich auch statistisch zeigen läßt: Während die Hafenstädte bei derartigen Seuchen etwa die Hälfte oder mehr ihrer Bevölkerung verlieren, sind Städte und Landschaften im Binnenland wesentlich schwächer betroffen. Angesichts der Größe gerade der im 6. Jh. blühenden Küstenorte entfielen bei Gesamtverlusten von höchstens 30% auf die Bewohner der Binnenregionen, die sich von den Küstenorten fernhalten, nur noch geringe Verluste von wohl weniger als 20%. Diese Zahlen sind stark hypothetisch und beruhen auf zwangsläufig groben Schätzungen. Gleichwohl muß die Pest von 541/42 als demographischer Einschnitt beträchtlichen Ausmaßes für ganz Lykien gelten, an der Küste verheerend, im Binnenland vermutlich in etwas abgeschwächter Form.

Zusammenfassung

Bei der Beurteilung des archäologischen Quellenmaterials, welches für das spätantike Lykien zur Verfügung steht, ist größte Vorsicht geboten. Es muß betont werden, daß diese Aussagen größtenteils auf Informationsmaterial beruhen, das nur vorläufig und ungenau datiert und interpretiert werden kann. Teilweise haben, wie im Falle von Patara, groß angelegte Ausgrabungen einen beeindruckenden

¹⁰³ So zuletzt von Whittow 2001, 151. Tatsächlich scheint das 6. Jh. für Kleinasien eine Zeit der Seuchen und Naturkatastrophen gewesen zu sein: vgl. Brandes 1989, 181–188; Meier 2003, 321–340; Duggan 2004.

¹⁰⁴ Meier 2003, 330 hält die letztere Zahl für „wohl zu hoch“, während Duggan 2004 (mit Verweisen auf die ältere Literatur) anhand ausführlicher Schlußfolgerungen auf der Grundlage von Statistiken mittelalterlicher und neuzeitlicher Seuchen „at least 30%“ annimmt.

¹⁰⁵ VNS 51f.

¹⁰⁶ Zimmermann 1992, 101; Blum 1997, 112. Daß die lykische Küste wie in der gesamten Antike eine direkte Verbindung über das Meer nach Ägypten besaß, ist in der VNS auch noch für das mittlere 6. Jh. belegt: VNS 27.

Befund ergeben, der bislang jedoch mangels einer exakten Chronologie nicht hinreichend interpretiert werden kann, teilweise stehen an wichtigen Orten, so etwa in Tlos, gründliche Untersuchungen noch aus. Aus dem oben Gesagten wird m.E. dennoch deutlich, daß die spätantike bzw. frühbyzantinische Epoche vom 4. bis zum 6. Jh. in Lykien wohl kaum den Niedergang des städtischen Lebens mit sich brachte. Abgesehen von der eher pauschalen Preisung Myras als *lampra*,¹⁰⁷ die vornehmlich als rhetorisch einzustufen ist, lassen sich handfeste Belege dafür finden, daß die lykischen Städte in dieser Epoche eine weitgehend ungestörte Blütephase durchlebten. Es ist anzunehmen, daß der Wohlstand der Städte von ihrer Nähe zur Küste abhing, wobei die Hafenorte die wohlhabendsten waren, die Binnenorte jedoch keineswegs verarmten.

Die religiöse Transformation zu christlich geprägten Siedlungen brachte einige Unruhe mit sich, ebenso wie später die Streitigkeiten zwischen Monophysiten und Chalkedonianern. Daß die Städte Lykiens hierdurch auch nur zeitweilig in ihrer Funktionstüchtigkeit oder gar in ihrem urbanen Charakter beeinträchtigt worden seien, lassen die betreffenden Quellen nicht erkennen. Die wenigen aussagekräftigen Zeugnisse, die wir besitzen, führen uns die lykischen Städte vielmehr ausnahmslos als funktionierende Zentralorte mit einer sozial differenzierten Bevölkerung und in wirtschaftlicher Hinsicht mit einer Spezialisierung der Berufe und mit Arbeitsteilung vor.

Auch demographisch läßt sich im spätantiken Lykien kein Niedergang feststellen. Der Gefährdung durch isaurische Übergriffe und Räuberbanden verdanken wir einige im 5./6. Jh. errichtete Siedlungsmauern, die uns das geschlossene Siedlungsgebiet der jeweiligen Stadt in seinem aktuellen Umfang vorführen. Die meisten lykischen Städte hatten zu diesem Zeitpunkt keineswegs wesentliche Einbußen in ihrer Bevölkerungszahl hinzunehmen gehabt; die neuen Mauern umfaßten teilweise im Gegenteil sogar ein deutlich größeres Gebiet als ihre hellenistischen Vorgänger.

Die Siedlungen im Binnenland, meist die Nachfolgerinnen der ersten Dynastienburgen, blieben von Beeinträchtigungen noch das gesamte 6. Jh. hindurch weitgehend verschont. Für die Städte am Meer bedeuteten ihre gute Verkehrsanbindung sowohl die Grundlage ihres Reichtums, der sie spätestens zu Zeiten der *pax Romana* die Binnenorte hatte überflügeln lassen, als auch das Einfallstor für Krankheiten und Piraten.¹⁰⁸ Den ersten klaren demographischen Einschnitt brachte für diese Küstensiedlungen die große, aus Ägypten eingeschleppte Pest des Jahres 541/42. Läßt sich bei einer Küstensiedlung – wie etwa in Limyra und Patara – eine Verkleinerung des ummauerten Siedlungsareals im 6. Jh. feststellen, dürfte diese erst nach der Pest von 541/42 erfolgt sein und liefert keine Hinweise auf einen Verfall des lykischen Städtewesens in der Zeit zuvor. Der Nie-

¹⁰⁷ VNS 58 für Myra. Auch wenn man nicht der architektonisch deutenden Übersetzung bei Blum 1997, 75 („prachtvoll“) folgt, belegt die Bezeichnung doch immerhin einen urbanen Charakter, der Myra vom ländlichen Raum deutlich absetzt. Xanthos führte noch in der Spätantike neben Myra den Titel einer Metropolis: TAM II 257f.

¹⁰⁸ Zu Seuchen s.o.; zur Furcht vor Piraten s. Zimmermann 2000, 339 (mit Literaturhinweisen).

dergang der Binnenorte setzte wohl erst mit den Erschütterungen der politischen Ordnung in den Perserkriegen des 7. Jhs. ein.

Die verschiedenen strukturellen Änderungen in der Spätantike, insbesondere die religiöse Transformation zum Christentum und die sich daraus u.a. neu ergebenden Stadtbilder lassen erkennen, daß die spätantiken lykischen Städte einen grundlegenden Wandel erlebten und, genau genommen, keine 'antiken' Städte mehr waren. Die von LIEBESCHUETZ verneinte Frage, ob es sich noch um „im klassischen Sinn urbane“ Zentren handelt, betrifft jedoch lediglich einen Teilaspekt des spätantiken Städtewesens und reicht nicht aus, dessen grundsätzlichen Niedergang zu konstatieren. Ähnlich große Umwälzungen brachte für Lykien sicher die Hellenisierung im 5./4. Jh. v.Chr.,¹⁰⁹ und ein weiterer, wenn auch wesentlich schwächerer Einschnitt dürfte sich im 1. Jh. vollzogen haben.¹¹⁰ Von einer idealtypischen antiken Stadt läßt sich daher wohl kaum sprechen. Entscheidend ist m.E. die Frage, ob die spätantiken Städte in der Lage waren, ihre Rolle als Charakteristikum der lykischen Siedlungskammer zu bewahren und weiterhin als religiöser, politischer und wirtschaftlicher Zentralort eines Umlandes zu fungieren. Mit der auch heute noch angesichts des archäologischen Forschungsstandes gegebenen Vorsicht ist diese Frage sicher zu bejahen.

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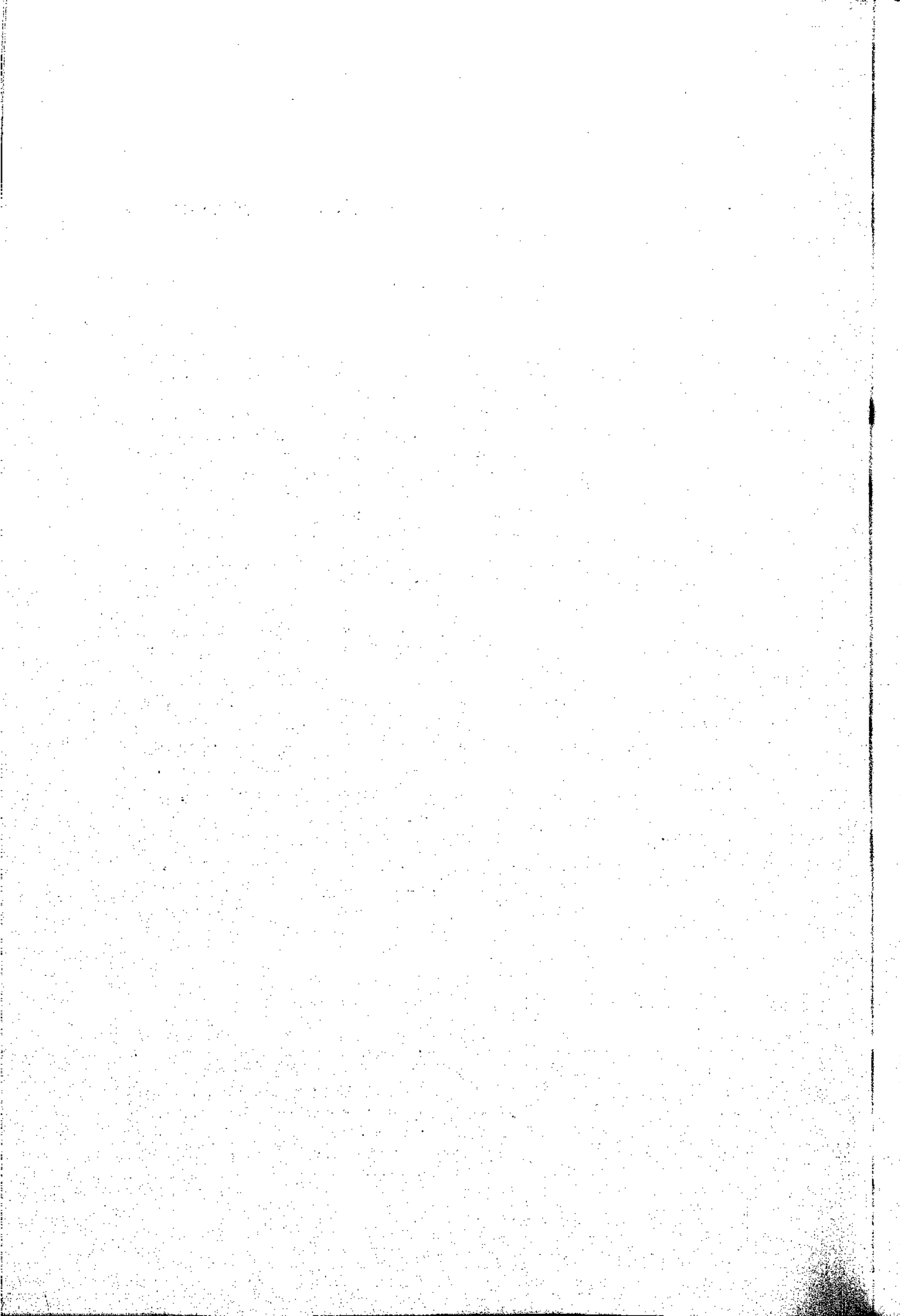
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¹⁰⁹ Die große lykische Dynastensiedlung auf dem Avsar Tepesi in Zentrallykien wurde um die Mitte des 4. Jhs. v.Chr. verlassen und weist keine Spuren von Hellenisierung (geostete Tempel, Theater, Gymnasium etc.) auf. Zur Einstufung als Stadt s. Thomsen 2002, besonders 406–409; Zimmermann 2003.

¹¹⁰ Mitchell 1993 I, 80f. 198f.; Wurster 1996; Des Courtils/Cavalier 2001, 170.

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Crisi e trasformazioni del governo municipale in Occidente fra IV e VI secolo

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Le tradizioni non meritano di essere rispettate che nella misura in cui sono rispettabili, cioè nell'esatta misura in cui rispettano i diritti fondamentali degli uomini e delle donne. Rispettare "tradizioni" o leggi discriminatorie equivale a disprezzare le loro vittime. Tutti i popoli e tutte le dottrine hanno prodotto, in certi momenti della loro storia, dei comportamenti che sono risultati, con l'evoluzione delle mentalità, incompatibili con la dignità umana; da nessuna parte si riuscirà a abolirli con un tratto di penna, ma ciò non dispensa dal denunciarli e dall'operare per la loro sparizione.

Amin MAALOUF, *L'identità* (Les identités meurtrières, 1998), trad. it. Bompiani, Milano 1999, 118s.*

Nell'accostarmi con un approccio sovraregionale alle strutture e alla prassi politico-amministrativa della città tardoantica in Occidente (prenderò in considerazione in misura inevitabilmente diversificata, innanzitutto in ragione della difforme disponibilità documentaria, penisola iberica, Gallie, Nordafrica, Italia), ho scelto di svolgere una trattazione libera di spaziare – non senza qualche necessario "andirivieni" – dal IV secolo sino a toccare l'età di Gregorio Magno, ricongiungendomi dal basso col *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* di Wolf LIEBESCHUETZ, volume dove si privilegia il V e soprattutto il VI secolo e col quale anche il presente contributo si pone in ideale dialogo.

A tale scopo, ho scelto di puntare la mia attenzione su due aspetti cruciali, fra loro interconnessi: (a) il rapporto fra politica municipale delle autorità statali e autonomia locale, i cui equilibri sono funzionali all'evoluzione dello *Städtewesen* delle città; (b) il passaggio da fase "curiale" a fase "post-curiale"¹ nel governo municipale tardoantico.

* Questa citazione, come ciascuno vedrà, non è pertinente al tema qui trattato. O meglio, lo è solo molto indirettamente, in quanto si inserisce nel dibattito odierno sul multiculturalismo, a sua volta collegato con quello sul 'declino' della città romana. Anche per questo tipo di catena di congiunzioni l'opera recente di Wolf Liebeschuetz è densa di embriazioni politiche e ideologiche. A tali questioni accennerò nella parte finale del mio contributo.

¹ "Post-curial Civic Government" suona il titolo del terzo capitolo di Liebeschuetz 2001a, 104–136.

Autorità statali e *Selbstverwaltung* municipale

Governatori e città: il problema

Nel 1982 Friedrich VITTINGHOFF interveniva nel dibattito sui rapporti fra stato e amministrazioni locali durante il tardo impero romano. Attenuando molto l'idea, allora dominante, di un contrasto fra un alto impero nel quale le città godevano di effettive capacità decisionali e un tardo impero in cui erano attanagliate dal centralismo e dal fiscalismo, Vittinghoff collocava il complessivo deterioramento nelle relazioni fra comunità civiche e stato "in einem kontinuierlichen Prozess in der gesamten Kaiserzeit" i cui fattori costitutivi, matrice di una crisi progressiva del sistema politico-amministrativo su base timocratica, non erano sostanzialmente mutati.²

Si nota, in questo contributo, una relativizzazione di un elemento al quale invece in maniera preminente è attribuito un peso decisivo per la fine, di epoca tardoantica, della *Selbstverwaltung*, del modello tradizionale centrato sulle competenze di curie dotate di notevole libertà d'indirizzo politico-amministrativo: l'ingerenza nell'amministrazione civica dei governatori provinciali e, con un impatto più episodico, di altre figure di amministratori, come i vicari. Convinzione forte della storiografia è infatti che, in virtù del riassetto provinciale e in generale della restaurata autorità imperiale diocleziane, l'accresciuta pressione degli organismi imperiali provocò uno scadimento delle responsabilità degli antichi gruppi dirigenti municipali.³ In molte aree si sarebbe sviluppata un'accelerata erosione – il termine più ricorrente – delle forme dell'autogoverno: un fenomeno in forza del quale le aristocrazie curiali sminuite nella loro discrezio-

² Vittinghoff 1994, 223; cf. 247, bilancio conclusivo a 246-248. Fra gli indizi evocati da Vittinghoff sono: la precocità delle regolamentazioni imperiali sull'evergetismo *ob honorem* e sui *munera publica* e di tendenze all'ereditarietà dell'appartenenza alle curie (bibliografia e rapida discussione su quest'ultimo punto in Palme 1999, 118 n. 171, ove si consente con l'opinione secondo cui l'ereditarietà non rappresentava in alcun modo uno *Zwangsmittel* ma nasceva dalla volontà di reclutare i curiali all'interno del loro ceto), il fatto che persino nel I-II secolo determinate città avevano dovuto ricorrere alla coazione per nominare dei magistrati. Sul declino della competizione politica locale visto anche come concausa di fenomeni di calo edilizio già nel II secolo avanzato p.es. (per la Spagna, ma sulla base di documentazione o argomenti più generali) Keay 1996, 25s.; Arcé 2002, 43. Ward-Perkins 1998, 378s., con qualche oscurità rileva le difformità regionali: allude a un'epoca relativamente precoce (però da collocare dopo la fine del II secolo) e parla di "broad pattern of aristocratic disillusionment with civic life, coupled with a decline in aristocratic civic spending", di fatto in particolare sottolineando la decadenza civica nell'Italia settentrionale e "in most of the northern provinces", in contrasto con la continuità di vita tradizionale nel settore suburbicario, nell'Africa settentrionale e in città maggiori orientali.

³ L'idea che la grande crescita del numero delle province sia stata nociva per l'organizzazione della vita municipale secondo gli schemi classici, come effetto della ravvicinata e diretta ingerenza dei governatori sulle più ridotte circoscrizioni loro sottoposte, è idea diffusa; cf. Ward-Perkins 1998, 375: "Many more (smaller) provinces were created, and their imperially appointed governors exercised much stricter control ... than had provincial governors under the early empire"; analogamente, fra altri, Claude 1969, 146; Liebeschuetz 1992, 6; Lepelley 1999, 242.

nalità divenivano sempre meno competitive; andava in crisi il prestigio delle leaderships, e con esso l'intera organizzazione della politica municipale. Javier ARCE imputa all'interventismo di governatori (e vicari) negli affari municipali di essere una delle cause "de la pérdida de la vitalidad y del nervio de las ciudades".⁴ In un contributo recente Ariel LEWIN scrive: "the new position held by governors in the cities may have further contributed to the decline of the *curiales* as a class. In the long run, government interference seems to have presented an obstacle to the emergence of an active local ruling class capable of running the cities".⁵ Potremmo richiamare molte analoghe formulazioni.⁶ Questa linea è, nella sostanza, convalidata da LIEBESCHUETZ, sia nel suo *survey* recente sia in scritti anteriori.⁷ Per l'Occidente, le iscrizioni onorarie pubbliche, quasi del tutto finite a partire dal secondo quarto del V secolo, ma che da molto prima sembrano testimoniare duri colpi inferti al primato delle élites cittadine, viene letto a conferma di questo fenomeno. Secondo le indagini archeologiche, gli spazi pubblici e gli edifici secolari classici tesero – invero con eccezioni e comunque ritmi assai variabili – a divenire desueti, abbandonati o mutati nella loro funzione.⁸

⁴ Arce 1982, 102; la stessa formulazione in Arce 2002, 46s.

⁵ Lewin 2001, 36; cf. Whittow 1990, 9. Una descrizione più articolata dei rapporti fra governatori e notabili (però strettamente incentrata sulle realtà orientali) svolge Lewin 1995, 97–107, con la sottolineatura opportuna del governatore come protagonista ma non "hammer" di un gioco politico locale fatto anche di divisioni interne al ceto dirigente.

⁶ Nei contributi specifici non è comune leggere riferimenti agli addentellati altoimperiali della decrescita del ruolo delle curie (senza che si possa capire se si danno per presupposti o meno), mentre oggi allo stesso tempo affiora qua e là la tendenza a 'deresponsabilizzare', almeno in parte, il III secolo come causa dell'involuzione della città romana. Il risultato è che il fenomeno finisce a volte per apparire scarsamente contestualizzato, e d'altra parte segnato in maniera quasi totalizzante dalle modifiche nelle strutture istituzionali di fine III e IV secolo e dalla conformazione dei rapporti fra rappresentanti del centro e ceti dirigenti municipali.

⁷ Una delle tesi di fondo sviluppate da Liebeschuetz è così riassunta nelle pagine conclusive del suo libro (2001a, 411s.): "the decline and fall of curial government was a consequence of the increased pressure on decurions by the imperial administration of the Late Empire, as well as of the new opportunities for social advancement offered by the enlarged civil service"; ibidem, accanto a questi elementi lo studioso non manca di segnalare le imputazioni, per così dire, mosse al cristianesimo. Cf. anche Liebeschuetz 1992, p.es. 4s. (rapporto causa-effetto fra presenza del governatore e decadenza delle istituzioni cittadine); 6–9.

⁸ Epigrafia e città tardoantica: Liebeschuetz 2001a, 11–19 (cf. Witschel, in questo volume, 359–411). L'assetto degli impianti urbani fra IV e V secolo conobbe un "cambiamento rivoluzionario", nella definizione di Ward-Perkins 1998, 404 (disposizione delle strade, templi, fori, bagni cedono il posto a un sistema meno pianificato e a costruzioni cristiane, senza che ciò implichi di necessità una crisi economica o demografica). Per lo storico della società e delle istituzioni cittadine chiamato a una sintesi che faccia tesoro del contributo dell'archeologia, un motivo di qualche disorientamento è legato al fatto che l'archeologia talvolta offre letture contrastanti dei medesimi contesti regionali o delle sorti di tipi di infrastrutture o spazi pubblici. Prendiamo il caso del Nordafrica di età vandala: si va affermando oggi l'opinione che l'Africa non abbia conosciuto contributo vandalo esorbitante alla diminuzione o alla cessazione dell'utilizzo degli antichi luoghi pubblici: così Delogu 2001 (contributo di Potter, dove si insiste per alcune sedi sulla continuità di funzioni delle città, per altre sul fatto che i vandali trovano una situazione consolidata, processi di trasformazione in gran parte già avvenuti); Ben Abed/Duval 2000; più dubbiosa Fentress 1993, 361s.; cf. anche Ghedini 1993, 324s. Se consideriamo i

Non sostengo ovviamente che nella critica storica manchi, o sia del tutto minoritaria, la consapevolezza delle difformità, dei contrappunti dei contesti, e poi del miglioramento che non poche città, oltre alle grandi capitali imperiali, ricavarono dalle nuove morfologie tardoantiche.⁹ Tuttavia, per quanto riguarda la natura e gli effetti del rapporto fra rappresentanti del potere centrale e comunità locali, anche tenendo conto delle esigenze di costruzione di modelli generali, mi pare utile svolgere alcune considerazioni che forse possono servire a ripensare e eventualmente a aggiustare l'impianto interpretativo di cui ho iniziato a parlare. Senza volerne contestare in assoluto la fondatezza come strumento euristico, se ne potranno almeno evidenziare alcune ambiguità o limiti.

Capoluoghi provinciali

Un primo punto riguarda i capoluoghi provinciali.¹⁰ Le informazioni in questa sede privilegiate, quelle non archeologiche, riguardano specialmente il IV e

monumenti classici, gli edifici termali continuano in maniera relativamente diffusa a attirare l'attenzione delle autorità e mantengono un loro ruolo nel paesaggio urbano – come forse, ma con qualche incertezza in più, le pratiche sociali abitualmente ad essi collegate: Caillet 1996, 194; Ben Abed/Duval 2000, 204; ulteriore documentazione è assemblata da Liebeschuetz 2001a, 39 n. 53; 97, 99. Spesso è arduo delineare un chiaro quadro evolutivo (anche all'interno di stessi ambiti territoriali), in grado di sorreggere le generalizzazioni, delle sedi per eccellenza della vita politica: i fori municipali. Arthur 1999, 174, per svariati centri del meridione italico parla di profonde modifiche a partire dal IV secolo di quelli che erano stati i *fora* e di scomparsa degli edifici amministrativi intorno a essi (cf. *ibid.*, 188); viceversa Baldini Lippolis 1995 porta vari esempi, per la medesima area, di continuità e relativo benessere da III a V secolo incluso. In Africa, i fori di Timgad e Cuicul erano ancora attivi a fine IV secolo (p.es. Fentress 1993, 355–357; cf. Ghedini, loc. cit. su Belalis Maior). Ai fori come spazi giudiziari ancora attivi sembrano alludere alcune volte i Concilia Galliae di VI–VII secolo; per città maggiori ci sono testimonianze palesi: a Lione all'epoca di Gregorio di Tours nel foro ancora si sbrigavano negozi giuridici importanti, vd. Février 1980, 452; analogamente per Arles, Loseby 1996, 55 (fonti: Sidonio e Cesario, alla luce del quale si ritiene che nel *forum* si trattavano “legal or business matters”); per Vienne un cenno in Avit. hom. 6. In generale sui fori nella Penisola Iberica nel IV secolo si sofferma Fuentes Domínguez 1999, 34s.; i fori tendono a perdere importanza rispetto agli standard precedenti molto elevati, tuttavia gli usi tradizionali sopravvivono e sono rarissimi gli abbandoni (non sapremmo dire quanto questo quadro complessivamente favorevole sia coerente con quanto si dice più avanti nel saggio a proposito della sparizione delle curie e degli *ordines*, fenomeno avanzato nel V secolo, ma iniziato “con claridad en el siglo IV”: *ibid.* 46). Per il costume di esporre statue in pubblico con funzioni esornative vd. per il V–VI secolo AE 1956, 259; Cassiod. Var. 2, 35–36; 7, 13.

⁹ Liebeschuetz non manca di notarlo (1992, 9 ma cf. 1992, 4s.; 2001, 12s.; 37–39). Similmente Ward-Perkins 1998, 382s. 386–388; Arce 1993, 400; Id. 2002, 50s.; il tema del rapporto fra nuove gerarchie di città e loro ruolo amministrativo (e militare) è ripreso in questi Atti da Federico Marazzi (33–65).

¹⁰ Ricerche, ora di impianto archeologico, ora basate prevalentemente sul vaglio di fonti letterarie e epigrafiche, hanno interessato *Hauptstädte* tardoantiche italiche, galliche, iberiche. Diamone un assaggio, con qualche breve osservazione. Si possono ipotizzare meccaniche almeno in parte comparabili a quanto avveniva nelle residenze imperiali (per Milano e Aquileia si rinvia a vari saggi di L. Cracco Ruggani, Arles: Loseby 1996, spec. 57, con accentuazione del suo carattere di “establishment city”, lo sviluppo della quale non sarebbe dipeso gran che dall'apporto dell'élite locale). Proprio perché la gerarchia non segue lo status politico-istituzio-

l'inizio del V secolo. Per queste realtà, numericamente più che raddoppiate rispetto al principato, si riconosce che la vicinanza delle istituzioni provinciali fu di solito fattore di sviluppo: infrastrutture, indotti sul piano della dinamicità socio-economica, possibilità di manifestare rapidamente i bisogni locali attraverso canali istituzionali,¹¹ rafforzamento ecclesiastico.¹² Di un riverbero favorevole dovevano beneficiare il contesto insediativo circostante e i centri urbani disposti lungo vie di collegamento con gli stessi capoluoghi.¹³ Consenso va riscuotendo negli ultimi anni, al di là delle diversità di modulazione, l'idea che il vigore di questi centri fosse garantito dalla presenza del funzionariato (abbracciando con questo termine anche i governatori) ma tendesse a produrre – e per periodi limitati – il mantenimento quasi soltanto delle strutture monumentali connesse con lo svolgimento delle attività dell'amministrazione provinciale: i magnati locali, già

nale, non è insignificante che nell'*ordo urbium* ausoniano, a parte i casi delle grandi metropoli, quasi tutte le città celebrate sono sedi prefettizie o anche semplicemente di governatori. La creazione o il rilancio di questi centri provinciali sembra non implicare necessariamente un ampliamento della superficie occupata: gli archeologi individuano diversi casi di restringimento dei perimetri delle mura tardoantiche (come anche ampliamenti, p.es. Bracara, capitale della Gallaecia: Keay 1996, 27): è il caso di Tarragona secondo Keay 1996, spec. 26s.; qui, se anche ci fu rimpicciolimento rispetto all'alto impero, la popolazione doveva essere abbastanza numerosa a giudicare dalle sepolture dal cimitero scavato negli anni 1930 da Serra Vilaró (Keay 1996, 31s.), si continuò a fare uso di almeno un *forum* cittadino (TED'A 1989 ma non vidi) e si può evidenziare la tarda attestazione di iscrizioni pubbliche, ancora nella seconda metà del V secolo (per gli imperatori Leone e Antemio, cf. RIT 100; Palol 1992, 381, 386–390; Keay 1996, 28s.). Altre capitali provinciali iberiche: Arce 1993, 399–402, con letter. specifica; cf. già Arce 1982, 98–99. Per Vienne (peraltro anche sede centrale di vicariato) ho consultato Pelletier 1974, spec. 18–25. Per Tours, capoluogo della Lugdunensis III dalla seconda metà del IV secolo vd. Pietri 1983 e Liebeschuetz 2001a, 6s. Sul dinamismo della popolazione residente favorito dalle capitali "provinciali" nell'età bizantina in Italia vd. Falkenhausen 1989, 403–437.

¹¹ Da un lato coi concili provinciali (per le province italiane discussione in Cecconi 1994, 83–106), dall'altro accedendo ai "servizi" degli impiegati dell'ufficio del governatore. Nell'*ordo salutationis* di Timgad si menzionano *officiales*-curiali, *officiales ex ordine*, espressione che potrebbe riferirsi a membri dell'*officium* provinciale che però svolgevano o avevano svolto i *munera* curiali (sugli *officiales* nell'*album* di Timgad vd. Chastagnol 1978, 33–39); essi entravano nell'*officium* con la designazione generica di *cohortalini*; cf. Soraci 2001, 562; Vittinghoff 1994, 245 e soprattutto Palme 1999, 117–120, anche sulla somiglianza di posizione sociale e giuridica fra *cohortalini* e *curiales* e sul fatto che l'esenzione dai doveri municipali poteva offrire uno stimolo, a uomini appartenenti ai ceti direttivi cittadini, a entrare al servizio del governatore (119). Legge di divieto è però Cod. Theod. I, 12, 6 (398 d.C.). Sulle possibilità offerte ai giovani esponenti di famiglie locali dalla presenza dell'ufficio del governatore vd. anche l'accento di Grelle 1999, 133.

¹² Interessante sui rapporti di precedenza fra Vienne e Arles è il canone 2 del concilio di Torino del 398 (CCL 148, 55s.): il vescovo che mostrerà che la sua città è metropoli di provincia – intendo senz'altro metropoli civile – possiederà il primato *totius provinciae* anche dal punto di vista ecclesiastico.

¹³ Per la Puglia e Canosa seguo i contributi, pubblicati in varie sedi, di Francesco Grelle (con la monografia pubblicata nel 1993, spec. 159–189) e Giuliano Volpe; in uno di questi, Volpe (1999, 274–276) sottolinea la "forza morfogenetica" dell'organizzazione provinciale su insediamenti e economia, con osservazioni sulla concorrenza di altri centri pugliesi.

nella prima parte del IV secolo, avrebbero maturato una sorta di distacco dalla città o ne sarebbero stati estraniati. Da costoro "more time was spent away from the towns as these were no longer central to political and social advancement" (Keay).¹⁴ Ne risultano talvolta configurati sfondi urbani un po' cerei, una vita monopolizzata in tempi precoci da ceti burocratico-militari, una semi-inesistente componente aristocratico-curiale, luoghi anche a bassa densità demografica o di ridotta superficie all'interno delle mure perimetrali.¹⁵ Tale visione non è esente da rischi di anacronismo e perciò occorre via via circostanziarne le spie documentarie e le cronologie. Altri elementi di riflessione emergeranno nel corso del lavoro; per il momento ricorderò come Tarragona, alla quale si riferisce la precedente citazione diretta, sembrare essere stata piuttosto popolosa e non priva di una certa articolazione sociale, a giudicare dalle sepolture scavate da Serra Vilarò e oggi così lette dallo stesso Keay,¹⁶ oppure l'iscrizione canosina del console apulo-calabro Cassio Ruferio, significativa della soddisfazione con cui i curiali potevano accogliere le iniziative architettoniche dei loro amministratori; Ruferio è elogiato dall'*ordo splendidissimus*, che gli decretò anche una statua, *pro meritis et dispositione qua civitatem omni e parte renobabit*: l'epigrafe potrebbe essere di pieno V secolo e comunque non è anteriore allo scorcio finale del IV secolo.¹⁷

Anche le sedi più abituali dei viaggi amministrativi dei governatori (viaggi tutt'altro che soppressi nel tardo impero nonostante le più ridotte dimensioni delle province), eventualmente arricchite di corti di giustizia,¹⁸ o comunque le località dalle quali il governatore passava nel corso di spostamenti di altro genere, approfittavano di un più immediato contatto con lui. È vero che in simili occasioni poteva fare da sgradito contrappeso agli abitanti il gravame rappresentato da pratiche di *hospitalitas*: la legislazione arriverà perciò a ridurre a pochissimi giorni l'anno il massimo di soggiorno dei governatori nelle città provinciali, che di solito "prevedeva" a quanto risulta tempi di *otium fra deliciae exquisitae* spese dalla collettività, in primo luogo dalle curie e dai *negotiatores* (Nov. Maior. 7, del 458 d.C., § 17).

¹⁴ La citazione è tratta da Keay 1996, 28 (l'evidenziazione è mia); *ibidem*, si afferma che la stessa pratica di favorire le costruzioni pubbliche connesse con il ruolo di capoluogo di provincia non sarebbe continuata molto a lungo dopo l'inizio del IV secolo (ma quando si sarebbe diffusa?). Cf. Loseby 1996, 55; inoltre Liebeschuetz 2001a, 6s.

¹⁵ C'è qualche somiglianza con le *sedes regiae* dei regni romano-barbarici secondo il profilo fornito da Ripoll 2000, che esamina diacronicamente il regno visigoto (vd. spec. 374); si tratta soprattutto di centri di potere, non si deve cercare in queste città una struttura urbana con un sistema abitativo privato normale: qui (Narbona, e primariamente Barcellona e Toledo) conta la fortezza, la cattedrale, il palazzo e poco più (alloggi per soldati, servi ecc.).

¹⁶ Keay 1996, 31-33 (l'autore è ben consapevole dell'esistenza di aspetti contraddittori fra i risultati degli scavi della necropoli e altri tratti dell'immagine della città). Cf. le nn. 10 e 14.

¹⁷ AE 1957, 43; Grelle 1993, 168s.; un analogo esempio africano di giubilo cittadino: CIL VIII 18328 = ILS 5520; Lepelley 1979, 107s.

¹⁸ Per rimanere in un contesto sud-italico, che fornisce testimonianze epigrafiche per la verità piuttosto fuori dall'ordinario per l'epoca, a Luceria in Puglia un anonimo correttore fece costruire per intero sotto Valentiniano I una corte di giustizia (*secretarium e tribunal*), *studiis curiae florentis*: AE 1988, 387; Grelle 1993, 181 e più ampiamente 182-185.

I codici sembrano suggerire che le residenze dei governatori erano favorite, per esempio in ambito edilizio o come sedi di spettacoli pubblici, a scapito di *oppida* e città minori della loro provincia (e.g. Cod. Theod. 15, 1, 14 del 365; 15, 1, 37 della fine del 398 in datazione Seeck). Ignoriamo l'estensione di una prassi che comunque non contribuì univocamente alla crisi del sistema cittadino.¹⁹

Politica finanziaria (specialmente in tema di edilizia)

Sia in Oriente sia in Occidente si va verso il prosciugamento delle responsabilità finanziarie dei consigli municipali, in particolare nel settore edilizio; una tendenza, questa, che poi si sostanziava del sequestro di una cospicua parte delle rendite delle città da parte dello stato.²⁰ Questo ribaltamento di responsabilità ebbe

¹⁹ Che il tardo antico abbia conosciuto una frattura più accentuata che in passato fra città ricche e organizzate, eventualmente in grado di assorbire nuovo urbanesimo, e città più piccole e peggio rappresentate, con un impoverimento talvolta destinato a tramutarsi da crisi ad abbandono di queste ultime, è stata opinione valorizzata da Santo Mazzarino (1951, 251-257), confortata anche da documenti legislativi come quelli richiamati nel testo. Il punto merita una digressione. Liebeschuetz (almeno in 1992, 9) constata una non-riduzione del numero delle città: "There was a tendency for smaller centres to develop, and for a denser network of towns to come into being...". Per alcune regioni (Italia, Africa) c'è una permanenza di istituzioni tradizionali in centri di modeste dimensioni; vd. Cecconi 1994, spec. 175s.; da un elenco ragionato delle sedi episcopali attestate nel corso del VI secolo-inizio VII in Italia, fornito da Tabata 2002, 299-321 (ringrazio l'autrice per avermi fatto avere una copia della sua per ora inedita tesi di dottorato, preziosa per l'ampiezza dei materiali raccolti), si osserva un gran numero di località di media e minore importanza, con prevalenza - si noti - di città centro-meridionali; un dato interessante anche se rimane un principio di fondatezza non ovvia quello di dedurre automaticamente dalla presenza di una diocesi ecclesiastica l'esistenza di una città in senso proprio e più ampio (sulla definizione di città romana e altomedievale dipendente dalla sua funzione amministrativa, ecclesiastica o civile, cf. Ward-Perkins 1996, 6; diversamente Liebeschuetz 1992, 32; nel senso di una vicinanza sino quasi alla coincidenza fra *civitas* e amministrazione episcopale il canone 5 del concilio di Tours del 567, cf. Beaujard 1996, 138); sugli sviluppi nell'Italia bizantina cf. Falkenhausen 1989, 452-464. Per l'Africa si veda Lepelley 1979/81. La distinzione fra *civitates maiores* e *minores* è banale in sé, però potrebbe denotare un reticolo cittadino piuttosto esteso ancora verso la fine del VI secolo nella Spagna visigota; Vives 1963, p.es. 87s. (Conc. Bracaraug. II, 572 d.C.). Per gli elenchi di città galliche e iberiche, per tutto il periodo qui considerato e oltre, "ricavabili" (sempre con la riserva di cui sopra) o comunque da mettere sotto osservazione, da sottoscrizioni a atti di concilii e da altre fonti ecclesiastiche vd. Vives 1963, passim; Concilia Galliae (Conc. Aurelianense del 511 e del 541); per Février 1977, 201; 204, le nuove sedi episcopali sorgevano in città che avevano acquisito un rilievo; indizio anche di una mobilità ascensionale nel quadro delle città della Gallia, cf. Goudineau/Février/Fixot 1980, 115.

²⁰ Fra le rare iscrizioni tarde che dichiaratamente alludano a forme di finanziamento comunitario vedasi: CIL IX 3685 (Marsi Marruvium), con la vecchia formula *aere conlato*; CIL IX 2638 = ILS 5588 (Aesernia), con la richiesta del rettore provinciale, le spese di un *vir primarius* ma *acceptis columnis et tegulis a re publica*; per l'Africa vd. CIL VIII 23849: *sumptu civium*, Lepelley 1979, 103. D'altra parte una legge come Cod. Theod. 15, 1, 37 attribuiva o confermava poteri abbastanza evidenti agli ordini *civitatum* in materia di difesa del patrimonio monumentale e artistico, mentre per i governatori era prevista libertà di decisione per *horrea*, *stabula* ecc. Su imperatori e rendite municipali, Ausbüttel 1988, 65-69; Delmaire 1989, 276-282; Lewin 2001, part. 27s., con letter.; Liebeschuetz 2001a, 169-202 (con particolare riferimento al mondo greco-orientale e all'Egitto) e spec. 175-178.

complesse conseguenze sociali, culturali, nel modo di pensare. Tuttavia non sfociò mai in un completo esautoramento: la normativa imperiale ha cercato in taluni casi di offrire alle città delle garanzie minime di libertà di iniziativa e scelta, come si può constatare per una costituzione del 431 di cui sarebbe importante valutare l'efficacia e la durata.²¹ Ci saranno stati anche in Occidente, come ad Antiochia, consigli municipali che controvoglia, a costo di un'ulteriore demotivazione, avallavano le altrui iniziative monumentali e le modalità dei loro finanziamenti e erano costretti a constatare ingiustizie di vario ordine commesse dai governatori.²² Ci furono, in Occidente, *iudices* avidi e vessatori, entità ostili ai provinciali loro sottoposti, come risulta dalle istantanee cariche di condanna morale del *De rebus bellicis* o di Salviano.²³ Ma c'è solo questo? Nelle città dove i governatori avevano maturato interessi o nelle città che gli erano care per motivi disparati, ebbene si può ritenere che qui almeno una contropartita per la comunità intera – e per magistrature e *ordines* chiamati alla collaborazione – fosse un relativo dinamismo edilizio. Non è probabile che le numerose epigrafi di IV fino all'inizio del V secolo in cui gli ordini municipali e i *cives* inneggiano ai governatori restauratori di opere pubbliche varie fossero solo il prodotto di melliflue (o forzate) esibizioni retoriche.²⁴ Del resto il dubbio che sorge è se le città soffrissero maggiormente le umiliazioni di un governatore invasivo o l'insicurez-

²¹ Costituzione del 431: Cod. Iust. 4, 61, 13: ... *atque hanc tertiam iubemus adeo in dictione urblum municipumque consistere, ut proprii compendii curam non in alieno potius, quam in suo arbitrio noverint constitutam* ... (con piena autonomia di uso da parte delle città del terzo delle proprietà sui fondi), vd. Voci 1989, 100; cf. anche Delmaire 1989, 653. Le città o le curie potevano ricevere beni altrui, essere titolari di *fundi* (anche se le fonti non sempre consentono di sciogliere il nodo della pienezza o meno di tale titolarità dinanzi alla *res privata* o alle *sacrae largitiones*: Voci 1989, 95–105), essere passibili di multa, erano responsabili di una cassa pubblica (Nov. Val. 3 § 3; Nov. Val. 13 § 1; Nov. Maior. 11: rispettivamente del 439, 445, 460). In linea di principio esisteva comunque una separazione fra beni appartenenti alla curia e beni della città, vd. Delmaire 1989, 648 n. 9; tale distinzione è chiara in Nov. Iust. 120 § 1, 1. Si veda anche Cod. Theod. 10, 3, 5 e Cod. Theod. 15, 1, 41; Voci 1989, 98–100; Soraci 2001, 591s. Sui *servi publici* municipali si veda Lenski in questi Atti, 335–357.

²² Lewin 2001, 33.

²³ *De reb. Bell.* 4; Salv. gub. p.es. 5, 24; 5, 26; Cecconi 1998, 155.

²⁴ Questa è anche la convinzione di Lepelley a proposito di alcune iscrizioni africane con l'elogio dei tempi felici di IV secolo e dei governatori provinciali che li incarnavano (Lepelley 1979, 103s.). Ecco un esempio di collaborazione fra governatore e curia, con l'apprezzamento dei cittadini: *Statuam Antonio Iustiniano praesidi provinciae Samnitium reluctanti congregata omni multitudo civitatis fuis precibus ut susciperet Venafranae urbis populus conlocavit ob merita quibus una cum splendidissimo ordine statum iam conlapsum pro beatitudine saeculi reparavit* (CIL X 4858, da *Venafrum*, cronologia di massima attorno alla metà del IV secolo). In Italia e Africa la documentazione è in generale comunque significativa e la si rintraccerà nelle opere di riferimento. Più rari esempi, ma in un contesto di attestazioni epigrafiche complessivamente molto scarse, riguardano la Gallia: Krause 1987b, 76; Février 1980, 451 e 472. Per un'epoca molto avanzata, un raffronto può essere fatto con l'iscrizione di Ain Djeloula (Tunisia centrale) studiata dopo Pringle e Durrat da Modéran 1996: il testo ricorda le opere del grande Solomon e del tribuno Nonnus che ha obbedito a Solomon; la città beneficiata, apostrofata al vocativo, è destinata a ritrovare, grazie a questi rappresentanti di Giustiniano, *censuram statum cives lus moenia fastus*; vd. sotto n. 83.

za di un governatore assenteista e distante. In altri tempi le città potevano persino domandare di essere sorvegliate da *curatores*, delegati imperiali di cui oggi si riconosce la minore temibilità rispetto a quanto non si pensasse un tempo ma che comunque condizionavano di fatto la libertà civica in materia finanziaria.²⁵ Drammi profondi forse nascevano anche laddove comunità svuotate di risorse ormai in buona parte devolute al tesoro imperiale erano lasciate a loro stesse, magari a un'autogestione di fatto però priva di punti di riferimento.²⁶

Politica e rapporti di forza

Un aspetto collegato è quello dei rapporti di forza a livello locale. La mia impressione è che troppo spesso si presupponga come fenomeno radicato e dominante la conflittualità fra amministratori provinciali e dirigenti locali. A questi ultimi dei governatori malvagi avrebbero, che so, imposto *iniuriae corporales* – come sanzione giuridica o, si direbbe, come puro cinico segno di superiorità – e in fin dei conti sarebbero state sottratte energie vitali.

È vero che Libanio spiega con queste violazioni dei diritti civili, attribuendo a esse importanza decisiva, il fenomeno dell'abbandono delle curie. Interviene poi una serie di divieti a frenare pratiche di prepotenze e punizioni sentite come oltraggiose per i curiali. Non si possono negare simili pratiche.²⁷

Per altro verso, le autorità centrali erano in grado di far pagare anche piuttosto duramente ai governatori certi loro comportamenti disinvolti. Così dovè accadere per il *iudex* campano accusato di *nimia arrogatio* verso l'*ordo* di Avellino (Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 68, del 364 d.C.), così accadde in un caso famoso con la rimozione dal proconsolato d'Asia di Nicomaco Flaviano iunior nel 383 (Lib. or. 28, 5; Symm. ep. 3, 69).²⁸ Una certa percentuale di amministratori avrà

²⁵ Jacques/Scheid 1990, 267 (*logistès* a Afrodizia, sotto Commodo). I curatori potevano abrogare, godendo, entro certi limiti, di poteri discrezionali, i decreti curiali (Ulpiano, *liber singularis de officio curatoris* r.p.: Dig. 50, 9, 4: *ambitiosa decreta decurionum rescindi debent ... nihil valebit huiusmodi decretum*); per un caso di ingerenza vd. l'epigrafe di Iulius Paternus a Catania: CIL X 7024; Manganaro 1959, 145–156.

²⁶ Governatori e finanze municipali (Italia): Ausbüttel 1988, 135–147, 156–160. La questione della compatibilità e della coesistenza ai vari livelli fra governatori e organismi civici, e in particolare sul piano della gestione delle finanze, storicamente essenziale come campo di esercizio dell'autonomia municipale, deve essere posta evitando pregiudiziali generalizzazioni negative. Sul tema, sul quale tornerò subito oltre nel testo per coglierne altri aspetti, mi sono soffermato in lavori precedenti, nello sfondo della diocesi italiciana: Cecconi 1993, 44–47 (il ritorno ad una antica collaborazione fra governatori e ceti dirigenti locali in ambito fiscale, ostacolata dalla presenza destabilizzante dei *palatini*, è vista dai poteri pubblici come auspicabile riforma delle pratiche tributarie e possibile garanzia del benessere dei sudditi); Id. 1994, 133–169; Id. 1998, 152–158. Con speciale riguardo a fonti e contesti orientali, cf. Lewin 2001, 32 con n. 40.

²⁷ Jones 1964, 750: "Libanius is insistent that the flogging of decurions was the major cause [spaziatura mia] of the decline of the councils", Jones 1964 III, 240 n. 88 (con i riferimenti anche alle fonti legislative, fra le quali una legge del 387 ammetteva punizioni corporali in caso di ammanchi e estorsioni in ambito fiscale). Violenze dei governatori e vescovi: Liebeschuetz 2001a, 142.

²⁸ Su quest'ultima vicenda cf. Pellizzari 1998, 209; Cecconi 2002, 220. Per una brillante trattazione sulla capacità delle aristocrazie locali di farsi temere dai governatori provinciali si veda Brown 1992, 23–25.

voluti evitare di incorrere in cattivi giudizi da parte dei provinciali o di rischiare poco simpatici ricorsi a corte. Accanto alla ricerca del consenso, in linea di principio c'era coincidenza di interessi fra alcuni settori delle curie e governatori, in tema di correttezza nella rotazione dei *munera*: che vi fossero abbandoni dei *munera* avrebbe potuto significare per gli uni un sovraccarico di impegni, per gli altri il dover giustificare un impoverimento numerico, una crisi della *celebritas* delle curie locali che contravveniva da sempre agli indirizzi amministrativi e agli ideali della politica romana e imperiale.²⁹ Numerose sono le variabili che entrano in gioco. In certe aree regionali – l'Italia centromeridionale con la Sicilia in primo luogo, ma il discorso riguarda anche l'Africa – il rettore di provincia era spesso un membro della nobiltà senatoria con possedimenti in loco, attento a esercitare in modo equilibrato le proprie mansioni. Soprattutto in casi del genere c'erano dunque al tempo stesso esigenze amministrative e rispetto per comunità alle quali il governatore era legato da antichi rapporti, che venivano rinfocolati durante il periodo di servizio. Un cospicuo numero di iscrizioni onorarie o, per esempio, Simmaco, non lasciano affatto la sensazione che i soggiorni in provincia degli amministratori imperiali avessero riverberi troppo corrosivi per la sopravvivenza delle curie cittadine e per la sociabilità delle folle locali. La presenza dei governatori, simbolo dei poteri costituiti, era anche un incentivo allo svolgimento di solennità cerimoniali che coinvolgevano tutta la comunità su iniziativa di notabili (che se dotati di un minimo di capacità di adattamento non avranno sentito decurtazioni rispetto ai fastigi passati).³⁰

Spostiamoci a poco dopo la metà del V secolo. La Novella 7 di Maggioriano (in particolare §§ 9–11) parla del divieto a privati di alienare possedimenti rustici o urbani, a meno che non vi sia l'*interpositio*, l'intervento di un decreto della

²⁹ Previsioni di casi che dovevano essere più rari, nel senso che si prevede che le città non siano abbastanza zelanti nel richiamare coloro che tentano di evitare gli obblighi civici, in Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 110 (385 d.C.); analogamente, casi di disertori protetti, contro i loro interessi, dalle curie: Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 113 (386 d.C.). Per l'attenzione dei curiali a una composizione ampia della curia e a limitare il loro reclutamento nel clero vd. p.es. Innoc. ep. 3, 9 (PL 20, 492); ep. 37, 5 (PL 20, 603); così Sarsina in epoca ostrogota, Cassiod. Var. 2, 18; cf. Cassiod. Var. 9, 4. L'ideologia del principe come tutore e promotore di un sistema urbano inscindibilmente legato, anche come condizione per il conferimento dello *ius civitatis*, alla presenza di un corpo decurionale di entità minima prefissata, che è sempre visto con favore si possa superare, è un aspetto arcinoto che trova conferma fra III e IV secolo in iscrizioni come quelle di Tymandus e di Orcistos (cf. l'importante epigrafe della *civitas Heracleotarum*, pubblicata da Mitrev/Tarakov 2002). Per il rilievo della *numerositas* ai fini dell'assolvimento delle mansioni amministrative e anche come titolo di prestigio si veda anche p.es.: Cod. Theod. 12, 5, 3 = Cod. Iust. 10, 32, 52 (397 d.C.); Nov. Val. 3 § 3 (439 d.C.).

³⁰ Pensiamo a tavole come quella del 325 dalla città di Amiterno in area Sabina (AE 1937, 119): vi vediamo l'efficace sinergia fra tradizionale munificenza privata, espletata qui da un patrono in forme straordinarie, il nome del Cesare di cui si celebrava il *dies natalis*, la prestigiosa e nobilitante *praesentia* del governatore alle manifestazioni organizzate dai decurioni a ranghi compatti. Per quanto sia difficile valutare appieno la rappresentatività di simili testimonianze, non si veda perché questo tipo di eventi (di cui del resto altre tracce, pur meno suggestive e esplicite, affiorano sia nelle iscrizioni sia nelle fonti letterarie) dovesse essere una rarità. Sul documento e su quello collegato AE 1937, 121, cf. ora Goddard 2002, 1027–1047.

curia a garanzia dell'esistenza di una necessità impellente per tale vendita.³¹ Neppure un *iudex provincialis* può da solo decidere se vi siano le condizioni di necessità in base alle quali soltanto erano ormai ammesse le vendite coi conseguenti cambiamenti di anagrafe tributaria. Il motivo è che un *iudex* provinciale può assumere atteggiamenti lassisti favorendo richieste illegittime, che devono vedersi alla luce di quanto viene detto poco sopra nella stessa costituzione sulla 'fuga' dalle curie o dai collegi professionali coperta da loschi traffici dei *principales*.³² Qui l'*ineluctabilis necessitas* potrà essere stabilita solo dal prefetto al pretorio. Se ingiustizia o malversazione ci sono da parte dei governatori, esse in questo caso assomigliano, piuttosto che a oppressione o ostile ricatto, a appoggio e complicità. Appoggio e complicità potevano, beninteso, risolversi col favorire solo una frazione della città, o una frazione della curia, con un incremento di difficoltà per le altre, ma potevano anche esercitarsi in modo tale da essere accolti con più generale soddisfazione o con la soddisfazione di coloro i quali in un dato momento incarnavano dinanzi al mondo esterno la città. Potevano far 'respirare' la città.

Prima di passare alla seconda sezione di questo lavoro, desidero considerare brevemente il rapporto dei governatori con un gruppo sociale che costituiva una delle strutture portanti della città tardoromana, gli appena menzionati *principales*. Membri organici delle curie, essi mantengono nel V secolo e anche oltre, almeno in alcune aree dell'Occidente, una posizione allo stesso tempo di primato politico e di responsabilità.³³ Incaricati della *distributionum forma*, ovvero della

³¹ In caso di vendita di uno schiavo non serve il decreto, bastano le firme di cinque *primates* consenzienti: *in mancipio tantummodo distrahendo non est decreti quaerenda sollemnitas, si quinque primorum curiae subscriptio atque consensus adiecta monstretur* (Nov. Maior. 7, § 9). La curia era tradizionalmente depositaria della verifica sullo stato delle proprietà all'interno del territorio cittadino (così si veda Symm. Rel. 28, 5 coi curiali testi a un processo in cui di liti per la proprietà si trattava; cf. Symm. Ep. 9, 10 con principali e contabili che redigono il registro delle imposte). Cf. anche Cod. Theod. 12,3,1 (386 d.C.).

³² Sui collegi professionali nella vita della città tardoantica e sul loro rapporto con le curie, soprattutto alla luce delle fonti legislative (con un posto di spicco per la Nov. Maior. 7), vd. lo studio di Carrié 2002, spec. 319-321.

³³ Essere *principalis* poteva essere ragione di orgoglio gentilizio, come nel caso della dinastia di *principales* cui apparteneva Lol(lius?) Cyrius di Velitrae, capace di vantare patronati e esperienze di evergetismo tradizionale per almeno tre generazioni a risalire dall'età valentiniana (CIL X 6565 = ILS 5632). Jones 1964.III, 230s. n. 41s., riporta una serie di riferimenti delle fonti, concernenti diverse aree; per i principali dell'Africa in particolare vd. Kotula 1982. Avrebbe meritato una discussione un po' più ampia la seguente riflessione di Liebeschuetz (defilata in nota: 2001a, 112 n. 53), dedotta dal fatto che le leggi compilate nel Codice Teodosiano che li riguardano spesso mancano nel Giustiniano: "It looks as if *principales*, like the councils which they led, lost their position of leadership in the late Late city". In Italia troviamo - in una "late late city"! - una famiglia di *primarii/principales* attestata persino epigraficamente (Camodeca 1996, 189: epoca ostrogota, da Abellinum); principali anche nei papiri ravennati: Ausbüttel 1987, spec. 210 (ivi anche su cariche varie in altre città di VI secolo come Faventia, Beneventum, Syracusae); un *princeps* della curia di Cione nel 512 d.C.: CIL 12, 2660. Se torniamo a fare un ragionamento di ordine generale e per un'epoca anteriore, il loro ruolo è anche sancito dalle autorità centrali, da un lato con immunità (Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 75 e 77 del 371 e del 372 d.C.) e dall'altro con una previsione di pene superiori ai semplici curiali, in caso di inadempienze o reati. Sui *principales* da ultimo Horstkotte 2000.

ripartizione dei carichi innanzitutto fiscali e della loro elaborazione in documenti che continuarono a essere archiviati dalle città per tutto il periodo qui considerato, anche fra i principali ci saranno stati gli onesti e coloro che finivano con l'essere pericolosamente soggetti alle universali lusinghe delle irregolarità e dei favoritismi.³⁴ Fra i *curiales-tyranni* di Salviano in prima linea sono i *principales* (gub. 5, 17-18); alla volontà di tutelare – curiali minori, *possessores*, cittadini, rustici – dagli oltraggi di potenti che potrebbero benissimo avere la loro fisionomia si deve la nascita in età valentiniana (o la rinascita, se, come si è sostenuto di recente, la creazione della figura istituzionale risale a Costantino) del *defensor civitatis*, che doveva essere individuato all'interno di alcune categorie di funzionari imperiali fra i quali – si noti – gli ex-rettori provinciali.³⁵ Abbiamo testimonianze giuridiche vuoi di prevaricazioni di governatori a danno dei principali vuoi di collusioni fra governatori e principali, mentre in circostanze non rare i governatori dovevano appoggiare richieste di esenzioni o remissioni fiscali provenienti dagli organi dirigenti delle città.³⁶ Le attestazioni di pratiche illecite attuate dai governatori *per suggestiones* di principali (o anche per iniziativa dell'ordine dei decurioni) attraversano i momenti storici e raggiungono la legislazione visigota.³⁷ Si tratta di attestazioni indirette e sempre da depurare dagli orpelli dell'affabulazione retorica tipica dei codici tardoantichi, ma senza dubbio significative non solo di indirizzi di principio.

Non avrebbe senso tentare una mappatura completa o più sfumata delle dinamiche. Per quanto ci importa in questo momento, basti averne verificato ancora una volta la frastagliatura.³⁸ In definitiva, le fonti non consentono di

³⁴ Cf. sopra n. 31 su Symm. ep. 9, 10: "i 'principali' della curia e i funzionari municipali che redigono il registro delle imposte possono, a loro arbitrio, esentare taluni dalle spese e imporre ad altri indebiti oneri" (trad. Roda 1981, 376); più avanti l'oratore chiama i principali curiali e ricorda la incertezza delle leggi in materia di riscossione tributaria. Cod. Theod. 8, 15, 5: *principales, a quibus distributionum omnium forma procedit* (368 d.C.). Per l'attribuzione ai governatori anziché ai principali (che evidentemente in quel momento l'avevano) della *distributio* dei *munera* straordinari, cf. Cod. Theod. 11, 16, 4 (328 d.C.). Nel V secolo i *principales* partecipano anche alla redazione degli albi (su questo tipo di documento vd. Chastagnol 1978 e più oltre nel presente contributo): Nov. Maior. 7 § 18.

³⁵ Salv. 5, 17s.: ... *non summi tantum, sed paene infimi, non iudices solum, sed etiam iudicibus obsequentes. Quae enim sunt non modo urbes sed etiam municipia atque vici, ubi non quot curiales fuerint, tot tyranni sunt? ... Quis ergo, ut dixi, locus est ubi non a principalibus civitatum viduarum et pupillorum viscera devorentur...* Vittinghoff 1994, 242, afferma che Salviano "gegen die Kurialen als 'Tyrannen' polemisiert und ihnen unterstellt, dass sie sich vielleicht über diese Bezeichnung freuen, weil sie Macht und Ehre ausdrücke"; Salv. gub. 3, 50 usa il termine 'curiale' in senso analogo: è tutto il sistema fiscale perverso e il prete marsigliese non sembra intenzionato a fare troppi distinguo di comportamenti fra coloro che avevano parte attiva negli ingranaggi della riscossione. Principali ricchi e forti che acquistano beni dai curiali minori: Cod. Theod. 12, 3, 1 (386 d.C.). *Defensor civitatis*: Liebeschuetz 2001a, *passim* (vd. indice al volume, 468); adde i lavori giuridici di Mannino 1984 e Pergami 1995; inoltre Frakes 2001, studio complessivo, con la tesi che la carica fu istituita in tutto l'impero da Costantino; cf. inoltre *infra*.

³⁶ Cecconi 1994, 160-163.

³⁷ Cod. Theod. 10, 4, 2 (del 365, con *interpretatio*) = Brev. Alar. 10, 3, 2. Sulle *interpretationes* vd. ora Matthews 2001.

³⁸ Una lettura attenta delle compilazioni legislative è un buon antidoto a visioni monocolori,

cogliere linee di condotta chiare utili a confermare la tesi di un'incidenza diretta, sul declino del ceto curiale, dei mutamenti che da Diocleziano in poi avevano caratterizzato i distretti provinciali e con essi le modalità del controllo del potere centrale sulle città. La conclusione che ci sentiremmo di tirare sulla effettiva dannosità dei governatori per la sopravvivenza delle curie è dunque che si trattò di una "mixed curse", o anche di una "mixed blessing", a seconda delle accentuazioni soggettive su l'uno o l'altro aspetto.³⁹ Controllo centrale e politiche pubbliche verso le città non erano a mio avviso, difficilmente potevano essere, solo o eminentemente causa di logoramento per le strutture civiche tradizionali.

Profilo della situazione delle città, in relazione a curie e governo dei notabili con particolare riguardo al V secolo

Vengo ora a un secondo argomento: le forme e i limiti della transizione da governo curiale a governo dei notabili. Trattata insieme, anche perché spesso posta in un rapporto di causalità con essa, la questione della vitalità⁴⁰ più complessiva delle società urbane, soprattutto nel V secolo, ovvero nel primo momento in cui questa transizione sembra cogliersi con buona evidenza.

Governo dei notabili, "post-curial phase"?

Un'organizzazione curiale durò più a lungo in Occidente che dall'altra parte del Mediterraneo, mal riconoscibile dietro connotati assai invecchiati, dai livelli di efficienza probabilmente molto bassi, da tempo affiancata e superata in rilievo da altri attori del governo municipale (che della curia non facevano, o non facevano più, parte). È questo l'orientamento di Liebeschuetz, che spiega come in Occidente "curial government continued for longer, perhaps because the *curiales* were put under less pressure by the imperial government, and later by the Germanic kings".⁴¹ Credo che Liebeschuetz, nel parlare di tale "minore pressione", non dimentichi il confronto *per differentiam* con la sterzata impressa al mondo greco-orientale dalla normativa di Anastasio mediante l'introduzione di cariche che le fonti bizantine (Lido, Malala, Evagrio) pongono in alternativa alle curie, come quella di *vindex*.⁴²

perché da essa emerge benissimo che gli attori coinvolti entravano nel gioco della politica locale secondo ruoli e all'interno di meccanismi cangianti. Anche se si prende in esame la vitalità delle città in rapporto alla 'fuga' dalle curie si può notare che non sempre c'è un rettilineo precipitare verso il baratro della *débacle* municipale: Cartagine risulta in difficoltà in età costantiniana, fiorente nel 397: Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 7 (cf. anche 12, 1, 24; 12, 1, 27); Cod. Theod. 12, 5, 3 = Cod. Iust. 10, 32, 52.

³⁹ Si richiama la formula sintetica di "mixed blessing" con cui R. MacMullen, dando il titolo al cap. IV del suo celebre libro del 1963, enunciò l'impatto dell'esercito romano sulle città d'età imperiale.

⁴⁰ "Vitalità": parola dai molti e un po' ambigui usi ... ma come trovarne di più comode ed efficaci?

⁴¹ Liebeschuetz, 2001, 124.

⁴² Whittow 1990, 10-12: a pagina 12 si afferma che i curiali erano finiti in tutto l'Oriente a

Per tutto il IV secolo nelle aree da me considerate la vita associata si svolge (a livelli di intensità non uniformi e con differenze d'immagine legate alle fonti disponibili)⁴³ garantendo la persistenza di *cursus* magistratuali, nei quali si inseriscono i sacerdozi locali, patronato e evergetismo, forme di patriottismo civico, attività pubbliche svolte dai curiali ordinari con margini di discrezionalità.⁴⁴ *Honorati* e più di loro i vescovi cominciano a essere coinvolti nell'amministrazione cittadina.⁴⁵

Per gli anni successivi alla morte di Teodosio e alla discesa di Alarico, siamo in una situazione certamente piagata dalle invasioni e inedita per la costellazione via via più massiccia di organizzazioni statuali barbariche che, se per vari aspetti sono in continuità con il modello romano, introducono istituti e cariche forieri di novità per la prassi amministrativa (giustizia, fiscalità, ordine pubblico ecc.). Che le vicende esterne abbiano contribuito a accrescere i fattori di crisi economica e la disarticolazione socio-politica delle città e dei loro territori durante questo periodo è indubbio.⁴⁶ I contemporanei ebbero una percezione chiara del rapporto fra

metà VI secolo; Liebeschuetz 2001a, 108, ritiene inattendibili, se prese alla lettera, le affermazioni delle fonti sulla completa cessazione dell'esistenza delle curie in conseguenza dell'introduzione del *vindex*, ma accoglie il nocciolo di verità che vi si cela.

⁴³ Su una certa 'tensione irrisolta' fra tipi di fonti, archeologiche vs. letterarie, si veda anche Loseby nel nostro convegno per la Gallia (cf. 93-96); Wickham 1999, 11 per l'Italia. Non di rado l'archeologia coglie in prevalenza gli elementi di degrado (a prescindere dalle accurate scelte linguistiche con cui tale degrado può venir rappresentato) rispetto alla città romana alto e medio-imperiale, le fonti letterarie riescono a fornire un'immagine più brillante delle città. Si potrebbero rintracciare casi di concordanza come quello di Scyllaceum che l'archeologia mostrerebbe possente almeno alla fine del V secolo e oltre (Baldini Lippolis 1995, 34; basilica forense in vita a quell'epoca), cf. il ritratto idealizzato di quella che Cassiodoro definisce - per l'assenza di mura e lo sguardo che consente di lanciare verso la terra coltivata circostante - *civitas ruralis* in Var. 12, 15, 5.

⁴⁴ Per la documentazione rimando alle sintesi regionali pubblicate in particolare (non solo negli studi da me segnalati nella bibliografia finale) da Arce, Février, Lepelléy, Ward-Perkins, Cecconi.

⁴⁵ Cogliere con precisione il passaggio da governo dei curiali a governo dei notabili renderebbe opportuno, fonti permettendo, il comprendere preliminarmente se esisteva un'identità di gruppo nel IV secolo degli *honorati* e della misura in cui questi - forse specialmente nel settore fiscale - e i vescovi - in quello giudiziario - fossero stati già allora inseriti concretamente nell'amministrazione cittadina. In una legge del 365, Cod. Theod. 7, 6, 1 = Cod. Theod. 12, 6, 4, persone chiamate *honorati* risultano coinvolte in riscossioni insieme coi principali (anche se a quanto pare nella seconda costituzione limitatamente alla *susceptio vestium*); un'altra menzione di *honorati* nel IV sec.: cf. n. 53. Per i vescovi la supervisione sulle faccende riguardanti gli affari della chiesa e la giurisdizione in materia civile su richiesta di parte garantiscono (a partire dall'età costantiniana: Cimma 1989; Vismara 1995; Raikas 1997; Brown 2003, 100-105) un'interlocuzione significativa con la vita civica; cf. anche la fine del presente studio. Su casistiche giudiziarie e rapporti fra giurisdizioni anche i canoni conciliari ci danno informazioni preziose, p.es. Conc. di Toledo I, 397-400, canone 11 (Vives 1963, 22); Conc. Arelat. II, can. 31 (questa raccolta conciliare ingloba norme provenienti da concilii diversi e la sua composizione viene fatta risalire fra il 442 e i primi anni del VI secolo; CCL 148, 120); Conc. Andegauense del 453, can. 1 (CCL 148, 137).

⁴⁶ È da collegare con le guerre anche il fenomeno, sui cui caratteri e dimensioni però non ho le competenze per pronunciarmi anche solo optando per l'una o l'altra posizione storiografica, della ruralizzazione e militarizzazione delle residenze delle élites cittadine: Krause 1987a, 131-

guerre e invasioni e indebolimento delle strutture municipali.⁴⁷ Noi abbiamo buoni motivi per fare loro fiducia, senza dimenticare tutte quelle indicazioni, letterarie e archeologiche, che forniscono indizi più attenuati.

Il governo municipale nella maggior parte delle realtà geopolitiche occidentali di V secolo, soprattutto quelle ancora romane, è costruito su un interscambio elastico di funzioni formalizzate, ruoli di fatto e attribuzioni ufficiose. Uno studio

144; Liebeschuetz 1992, 16s.; cf. 24, 34. Si veda anche oltre la n. 63. Altro grande tema connesso è quello della recessione demografica. Che vi sia stato un calo demografico di lunghissimo periodo nella maggior parte dell'Occidente e specialmente in Italia è opinione convinta di Liebeschuetz 2001a, 390-399 (sin dal III secolo spazi vuoti sia in città che in campagna, periferizzazione degli abitati in città, diminuzione pesante dei piccoli siti occupati in campagna, economia di villa basata ampiamente sulla pastorizia; cf. ibid. 390s.: "It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Late Antiquity from the third century onwards witnessed a long and continuous fall of population in large parts of Italy and probably also in many of the provinces of the West"; ibid. 392: "The balance of evidence that there was a fall in population is to my mind at present overwhelming"); *contra* Wickham 1989, 145s.; rifiuta la tesi di un generale *Bevölkerungsrückgang* anche Krause 1987a, 229s. con bibliografia alla n. 407; per la Gallia, nello stesso arco di tempo, notazioni sul calo demografico in Lebecq 1996, 294s.; più specificam. sul V secolo cenni in Cecconi 1994, 172 con n. 3.

⁴⁷ Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 177 (413 d.C.): le devastazioni alariciane inducono gli imperatori, constatate le difficoltà dei municipi illirici, a sollecitare chi ne avesse i mezzi a assumersi volontariamente i compiti dei curiali nella consapevolezza di fare un gesto patriottico e di riceverne in cambio almeno la gratitudine delle popolazioni derelitte; l'assenza di *nexus* con la curia per questi finanziatori spontanei sarà provata, previa in tal senso una certificazione del senato municipale, dinanzi al tribunale del governatore o *apud duumviros* o presso il *defensor*. Un secondo esempio riguarda la Novella 32 di Valentiniano III, un imperatore che nei preamboli o nelle motivazioni delle sue *Novellae* non è avaro di brevi illuminanti accenni retrospettivi. Tale costituzione fu promulgata nel 451 poco prima dell'attacco unno nella Valle Padana e concedeva ai detentori di cariche pubbliche il diritto di compiere normali compravendite, ricevere donazioni ecc. Nel parlare dei decurioni costretti dal bisogno a vendere i loro beni, evoca l'impatto distruttivo avuto dalle invasioni alariciane sul sistema amministrativo e sulla rete municipale dell'Italia (§§ 5-6); si potrebbe tradurre: "Perciò io decreto che (retroattivamente), a partire da quando Alarico penetrò in Italia, nessuna azione giudiziaria sia mossa contro quelle proprietà vendute dai curiali nel modo indicato sopra ... È noto che dopo la fatale rovina causata dai nemici, a seguito della quale l'Italia ha tanto sofferto, in alcune regioni mancano avvocati e giudici e oggi le persone che conoscono il diritto e le leggi si rintracciano con grande difficoltà o non si rintracciano per nulla". Seguono altre allusioni ai problemi del reclutamento di uomini pubblici e allo svuotamento delle curie. Altri casi ciascuno con le sue proprie sfaccettature si possono trovare ancora nella legislazione: Nov. Val. 13 (del 445) § 10, collega disordini a crisi degli *ordines* e ivi bastano tre curiali a convalidare un atto scritto dal *publicus exceptor*; Nov. Val. 34 (del 451) § 1: Vandali rovinano gli *honorati Afri*. Il rapporto fra guerra e crisi della città è espresso anche nell'importante testo di Sidonio, ep. 7, 1, caratterizzato dal concorso caotico di prodigi naturali e del più ordinario sgomento della popolazione ridotta senza distinzioni di ceto a fuggire (*discessu primorum populariumque statu urbis exinanitu*: 7, 1, 3) dinanzi a incursioni visigote dei primi anni 470. Vanno poi presupposti cambiamenti di modelli urbanistici verso forme di fortificazione degli abitati, su istanza dei poteri pubblici (cfr. Cassiod. Var. 1, 17 ove Teodorico invita gli abitanti di Tortona a munire un castello sito nei paraggi e a insediarsi là dentro fortificando; cfr. 3, 48 per Trento-Verruca; Tabata 2002, 117-122); da *civitates* a *castra*: Brogiolo 1994, Liebeschuetz 1992, 15s. è dell'avviso che le invasioni in Occidente accelerino un processo di decadenza in atto, incidano insomma su realtà già molto vulnerabili.

approfondito degli ingranaggi di questo sistema non potrebbe disattendere questa constatazione di fondo. Dunque oltre ai vescovi,⁴⁸ che in contesto bellico prendono ulteriore importanza non solo come intercessori presso il nemico e redentori di *captivi* ma anche come veri e propri organizzatori delle difese militari delle loro città,⁴⁹ le fonti menzionano fra i gruppi che partecipano alla vita cittadina al primo posto gli *honorati*, quindi i *possessores*, le cui identità e funzioni suscitano qualche maggiore incertezza. Vescovi, *honorati* e con i limiti accennati *possessores* presero a essere viepiù coinvolti dal potere centrale nel disbrigo degli affari politico-amministrativi di valenza locale e provinciale (fra i quali da un certo momento in poi la disciplina religiosa),⁵⁰ e agirono con compiti consultivi e di rappresentanza.⁵¹ I *defensores*, che ci è già capitato di evocare, pur essendo detentori di una carica programmaticamente concepita per essere esterna alla città, sono in una posizione particolare. Armati di attribuzioni di tipo patronale e solidaristico a favore degli individui più esposti nonché di tutela della società cristiana, essi vengono eletti in sostanza dalle élites cittadine, da cui a volte persino provengono o di cui verranno a far parte. Fu questa una carica di successo, come dimostrano la fiducia che vi riponevano le istituzioni (al punto da

⁴⁸ Come noto, i vescovi svolgevano funzioni pubbliche nella vita della città in tutti i settori: giustizia (cf. n. 45), patronato fiscale e in generale *civibus auxilium* (come viene definito Sabino di Avellino, forse all'inizio di VI secolo, da un testo non troppo noto menzionato da Camodeca 1996, 188; un'indagine sui vescovi sotto gli ostrogoti in Tabata 2002, 138-145), edilizia sacra e di utilità e via dicendo. Tali attività prendono corpo soprattutto dal V secolo in poi, in realtà sia romane sia romano-germaniche. Ma è impossibile soffermarsi su un tema riccamente testimoniato dalle fonti, dalla bibliografia sterminata. Per attenersi a pochissime indicazioni si può segnalare come diversi interventi utili si trovano nella miscellanea di Lepelley 1996. "The Rise of the Bishop" è il titolo del capitolo di Liebeschuetz 2001a, 137-168, ma innumerevoli ulteriori riflessioni si trovano in altri punti dell'opera; per la Gallia vale la pena di leggere la nitida trattazione di Février 1980, *passim*. Anche se prevalentemente incentrate sull'Oriente e in parte costituite da tematiche già affrontate altrove, rimangono degne di attenzione le pagine di sociologia urbana antica scritte da Brown 2003.

⁴⁹ Su quest'ultimo aspetto cf. Maymó i Capdevila 1997. Per il riscatto dei prigionieri si veda Klingshirn 1985. Si noti che anche i curiali erano chiamati a occuparsi di riscattare i prigionieri fatti dai barbari: Cod. Theod. 5, 7, 2 (408 Seeck) = Sirm. 16.

⁵⁰ Naturalmente nelle controversie a sfondo etico-religioso hanno voce in capitolo sia esponenti del clero sia amministratori laici, come mostrano per esempio atti di vari concilii. Consentius a Agostino (Aug. ep. 11*); processi antipriscillianisti a Tarragona nella chiesa o nel *secretarium* (del municipio?). Vd. ancora Vives 1963, 129s., can. 16 del III Concilio di Toledo III (589 d.C.): *omnis sacerdos in loco suo una cum iudice territorii sacrilegium memoratum studiose perquirat*. Alcune leggi comprovanti l'azione congiunta clero - organi cittadini sono brevemente esaminate da Soraci 2001, 595s.; ne ho evocate altre, con particolare riferimento alla fase finale del conflitto cattolico - donatista in Cecconi 2000, 1829s. n. 31.

⁵¹ Fra le élites cittadine di V-VI secolo compaiono, potendo svolgere quantomeno funzioni di rappresentanza, anche uomini che esercitavano le arti e le professioni liberali. Così l'archiatra di Avellino morto nel 505 (Camodeca 1996, 189), i retori Pastore e Asclepiodoto nonché i *dokimoi-logimoi* di Napoli durante l'assedio di Belisario: Proc. bell. Goth. 1, 10; i *logimoi* di *Hadrumentum* menzionati nel *Bellum Vandalicum* procopiano (2, 23, 18) coincidono per Modéran 1996, 109s. n. 82 con i *principales*; *dokimoi* di *Sullectum* negoziano coi bizantini insieme al vescovo locale: Proc. bell. Vand. 1, 16, 10s. (cf. Modéran 1996, 111 n. 87).

affidarle in buona parte – come fa Maggioriano – le aspettative di una palingenesi della società romana in Occidente) e la sua longevità. Sino all'uscita dell'opera di FRANKS pubblicata nel 2001 non esisteva un'indagine esauriente sul *defensor* scritta da storici di impostazione non giuridica. Restano da vagliare in tutte le loro potenzialità singoli documenti, fra i quali l'epigrafe di C. Marius Eventius.⁵² Circa la posizione degli *honorati*, un punto che a mio parere meriterebbe riflessione è in che misura essi esprimano il fenomeno della 'fuga' e della rottura rispetto alle curie, sino a che punto cioè la nozione di *honoratus* possa essere associata a personaggi che almeno in avvio delle loro attività politiche saltavano a piè pari l'intreccio delle dinamiche locali per ritrovarle eventualmente più tardi in una posizione di primato: se le fonti di solito menzionano in modo distinto *honorati* e curiali, bisogna però pensare che oltre a una percentuale di *honorati* che avrà ottenuto direttamente le corrispondenti dignità, abbastanza numerosi dovettero essere i casi in cui essi provenivano dal consiglio municipale (eventualmente essendo portatori dei valori identitari di questo consiglio, sul piano della mentalità e dei comportamenti sociali) e svolsero – come voleva la legge – *honores et onera* prima di entrare nel servizio imperiale insediandosi nel posto che dava loro diritto all'epiteto.⁵³

⁵² CHL XI 15, dalla quale ricaviamo varie informazioni da raffrontare con quanto ci dicono i Codici: che il *defensor* ivi menzionato è clarissimo, è stato avvocato, ha ricevuto per *iussus* imperiale la ratifica della carica tenuta per un quinquennio a Fano (che gli dedica "a proprie spese" una statua *pro insignibus eius erga ordinem possessores et cives meritis adque beneficiis*) e in città viciniori.

⁵³ Nella guerra greco-gotica Liebeschuetz vede per l'Italia la svolta nel processo di passaggio, però già ben avanzato, da fase curiale a fase post-curiale, nel quale un ruolo centrale avevano gli *honorati* (2001a, 125–127: dopo la guerra i notabili presero decisamente il sopravvento). Lo studioso insiste sulla distanza, quasi l'estraneità, fra quelli che egli raggruppa sotto la denominazione *honorati*, "notables", e la realtà curiale (1972, 186–190; 2001a, 121). A sostegno di quanto ho delineato nel testo, serve menzionare come già nel 371, in modo molto puntuale, per il legislatore (Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 75) erano *honorati* i *sacerdotes* e i principali (altro esempio di possibile assimilazione fra *honorati* e principali) che avessero raggiunto tale loro posizione dopo avere svolto un regolare *cursus* locale. Sul rapporto fra *honorati* e curie elenco di seguito altre fonti meritevoli di qualche attenzione: nell'*interpretatio* della legge di età costantiniana Cod. Theod. 9, 19, 1 (= Brev. Alar. 9, 15, 1 = Cod. Iust. 9, 22, 21) oltre a riferimenti a curie attive si dice che un individuo privato *curiae dignitate* non poteva fregiarsi del titolo di *honoratus*: dove non è chiaro se voglia esservi un riferimento a un'identificazione fra dignità curiale e titolo di *honoratus* o se essenzialmente si intenda ribadire l'obbligo al *cursus* locale come preliminare a avanzamenti di status. In altri documenti troviamo espressioni come *honorati de civitate* (Concilio di Narbona del 589, can. 6; Vives 1963, 147); Cod. Theod. 1, 20, 1 interpr.: *honorati provinciae id est ex curiae corpore* (la parte del testo confluita nel codice è del 408 e si occupa di responsabilità giudiziarie ufficialmente conferite agli *honorati* e della regolamentazione delle attività giurisdicenti di *honorati* e *iudices*; Liebeschuetz 2001a, 128 n. 171); Leone Magno ep. 167 (PL 54, 1200) parla di affari *quae in epis-coporum honoratorumque examine confecta sunt* (ove *honorati* potrebbe comprendere tutti i vertici della società cittadina). Così pure quando fonti più tarde ci parlano dei ruoli direttivi di *proceres*, *optimates*, *seniores* ecc, questi termini suonano interscambiabili e generici al punto da essere quasi inutilizzabili ai nostri scopi, nel senso che non si può escludere nemmeno comprendessero i curiali o quello che di loro rimaneva (anche un esame dell'uso del termine *municipes* porterebbe a individuare casi tardi nei quali esso vale *curiales*).

La responsabilizzazione e i mandati ottenuti da questo insieme di raggruppamenti sociali e di rango, di vecchie e nuove cariche, garantiscono un apporto aggiuntivo all'organizzazione cittadina. Si affiancano infatti all'esperienza di curie e curiali – anzi in una posizione gerarchica di apparente superiorità – senza essere in grado di farne a meno. Permane, ovviamente, ma come sempre, nel rispetto della normativa imperiale, la cooptazione dall'interno dei consiglieri,⁵⁴ e i decreti delle curie rappresentano un atto deliberativo ben formalizzato nel 458 d.C. (p.es. Nov. Maior. 7 § 9, con la contrapposizione fra *decreti solemnitatis* e una *subscriptio* di cinque 'primori') e verosimilmente anche assai più tardi.⁵⁵ Anche allora (così pure nel *Breviarium Alaricianum*)⁵⁶ ritroviamo i curiali quali principali referenti dei ministri del re – e del governatore provinciale, ormai pallida copia di quel che era stato – nel comparto dell'imposizione fiscale: gli sono riconosciuti la verifica sulle proprietà, la distribuzione delle incombenze, la partecipazione alle procedure esattive, l'archiviazione dei dati anagrafici e catastali nei *gesta municipalia*. Ancorché inserite in un meccanismo contributivo per tanti aspetti detestabile, tali pratiche erano comunque un segno che un barlume di potere e in fondo di autonomia rimanevano nel seno della città.⁵⁷

così almeno per Cassiod. Var. 2, 18; 7, 47); ma cf. Brown 1984, 128–130; Ausbüttel 1988, 212; Liebeschuetz 2001a, 127; per la Gallia Loseby, in questo volume 90–92. Sulla definizione di *optimates* data ai principali da Simmaco in Rel. 28, 6 cf. Vera 1981, 212. Leggi che richiamano al servizio locale "lower ranking *honorati*": Liebeschuetz 1992, 21 n. 1. Sulla base del *Breviarium*, Liebeschuetz 1992, 20s., sembra ammettere che gli *honorati* erano considerati membri della curia nella Gallia visigota e sfiora la questione delle corti di giustizia in cui *honorati* affiancavano i governatori: l'analisi non è però risolta in modo soddisfacente anche perché i contesti cronologicamente si ammucchiano in modo mi sembra poco chiaro.

⁵⁴ Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 66 (365 d.C.); 84 (381 d.C.); 140 (399 Seeck); 142 (395 d.C.); 171 (412 Seeck).

⁵⁵ *Decretum* dell'ordine di Luni per la delibera di una statua al console di *Tuscia et Umbria*: CIL XI 6958 = ILS 1252 (dopo il 366 d.C.); *decretum curialium* nell'intestazione della formula cassiodorea, Var. 7, 47. In presenza di autorizzazione alla firma di pochi elementi visti come sufficienti per far passare un atto si pone il problema se sia legittimo definire tali riunioni come vere e proprie riunioni di curia: il problema è posto da Tabata 2002, 54.

⁵⁶ In generale sul *breviarium alaricianum* vd. Lambertini 1990.

⁵⁷ Se le fonti che nominano curie, persone o terre "curiali" nei regni romano-barbarici e germanici facciano riferimento a residui o implicino concrete attribuzioni istituzionali è questione delicata sfiorata da Liebeschuetz in alcuni punti della sua opera, come 2001a, 135s. *Gesta municipalia/confectio gestorum*: Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 151 (396 d.C.) = Brev. Alar. 12, 1, 8, con obbligo di presenza di 3 curiali del *magistratus* e dell'*exceptor publicus*; cf. Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 173 (409 Seeck); Nov. Val. 15 § 4; Edict. Theod. 52s.; Lex Romana Burg. 11, 2; 22, 3; 22, 4; 22, 6 (MGH, *Rerum Germanicarum Medii Aevi II.1, Leges Burgundionum*, Hannover 1892, p. 136 e 144s.); attività notarili – compravendite, testamenti ecc. – come tipiche anche delle città dell'Italia nel primo periodo bizantino e registri dei *gesta municipalia*: Tabata 2002, 241s. con nn. 25 e 26. I *gesta municipalia* nella Gallia sono ancora evocati dalle fonti di VII secolo: cf. Riché 1996, 187; sulla "lunga durata" della pratica, cf. pure Liebeschuetz 1992, 22s. In particolare nella Gallia visigota sembra che i curiali, oltre a continuare a tenere gli indispensabili registri municipali, fossero ancora i principali, se non gli unici, responsabili della riscossione fiscale, mentre una rottura dal punto di vista dei meccanismi esattivi avvenne col merovingi: Liebeschuetz 2001a, 130; cf. Wood 1994, 60–63. Finanze pubbliche nelle città della Gallia: cf. anche Rouche 1979,

Status curiale e città come terreno della politica, vivai di mobilità sociale

Nel 418, il vescovo Severo, attivo nelle Baleari, indirizza una lettera ai colleghi di tutto il mondo, una sorta di cronaca apologetica della conversione (necessaria e perciò stesso avvenuta con procedure piuttosto sbrigative, non senza l'intervento miracoloso delle reliquie del protomartire Santo Stefano) di un centro a forte presenza di ebrei. Severo descrive il contrasto della situazione politico-religiosa di Jammona e Magona/Mahón, situati nell'isola di Minorca, che a lui parevano *parva oppida*.⁵⁸ Con riferimento al secondo di questi due luoghi così definiti – dal punto di vista urbanistico vengono menzionati strade e vicoli, edifici di culto cristiani e giudaici ecc., altrove si parla di *municipium* – viene evocato un personaggio di origine ebraica, Teodoro, *cunctis curiae muniis exsolutus*, che era stato *defensor* e che in quel momento controllava il *municipium* come *patronus*. Più avanti ci viene narrato di una *materfamilias primaria civitatis*, di un certo Galilaeus a tal punto in vista nella sua città *ut etiam nunc defensor civitatis electus sit*, di un *vir honoratus* e di altre personalità che svolgevano un ruolo importante nel quadro urbano con risvolti sui rapporti fra comunità cristiana e giudaica; per esempio Artemisia, figlia di un governatore della provincia poi divenuto *comes*. Si tratta di un bell'esempio di fonte utile per la ricostruzione di una congiuntura di storia locale, dalla quale emergono anche elementi di interesse per i temi qui affrontati: la presenza di una curia, di cariche come appare qui quella di *defensor*, di un patronato municipale, di una certa stratificazione delle élites.⁵⁹

Disponiamo di informazioni diseguali per la comprensione della considerazione della società urbana presso gli uomini del tempo. Così, in tema di qualificazione dei curiali, un conto è la magniloquenza protocollare e rassicurante di testi di cancelleria come Cod. Theod. 16, 8, 24 del 418 d.C.: *curialium munerum honore, quem praerogativa natalium et splendore familiae potiuntur*⁶⁰ (che verosimilmente rispondeva anche alla volontà di tenere alto il prestigio di entità in qualche sofferenza), altro conto un passo di impronta provinciale come quello che si trova in un canone del concilio Regense (Riez), dove nel 439 la punizione

338–350; Durliat 1996, 273–275. *Exactio publica* da parte di curiali è attestata in Sardegna nel 594 (il caso è giudicato piuttosto eccezionale, ma per pochi decenni prima vd. Pelag. ep. 16; Gassó-Battle, p. 49); Greg. Mag. ep. 4, 26, linea 34; Liebeschuetz 2001a, 127; cf. anche Brown 1984, 17 (ove pure sulla testimonianza della c.d. *Summa Perusina*).

⁵⁸ Si veda Severus Majoricensis, Ep. de Judaeis, PL 20, 731–746 (732); oppure PL 41, 822–831, dove l'intestazione parla di una epistola di Severus *ad omnem ecclesiam*. Le *Insulae Balears* fra tardo IV secolo e inizi V sembravano vivere un periodo di slancio sia amministrativo, con la creazione di una provincia civile a sé, sia religioso (con l'approdo provvidenziale di reliquie di S. Stefano, che tanto peso avevano e avrebbero avuto per Agostino) e funsero da luogo di accoglienza per i fuggiaschi dal continente all'epoca dell'invasione vandala in Spagna.

⁵⁹ Su questo testo dalle molte risorse, del quale è stata talvolta, senza fondati motivi, posta in dubbio l'autenticità: Rabello 1981, 816–820; Brown 1983, 140–142; Ginzburg 1992; Bradbury 1996; altra bibliografia in Ubiña 2002, 197 n. 64.

⁶⁰ Cf. analogamente l'*ordinum splendor* di Nov. Maior. 7 § 2. Cf. già Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 66 (365). *Splendidus, splendidissimus* sono epiteti dell'autorappresentazione degli ordini municipali nell'epigrafia.

sancita dai vescovi gallici per un ecclesiastico sospetto di vicinanza a gruppi scismatici consisteva in una sorta di retrocessione del suo ruolo pubblico: a lui non poteva essere decretata una sede cittadina, una sede cioè che *curiae et civitatis species aut ordo nobilitat* (can. 3, CCL 148, 67). La nobiltà delle istituzioni municipali non deve illuminare di luce neppure riflessa il prete indegno. Testimonianze conciliari più tarde mostrano che le autorità ecclesiastiche si adoperavano perché la città fosse il luogo deputato per lo svolgimento delle principali manifestazioni liturgiche: a un *civis* è vietato celebrare feste religiose *in villa*; i *cives natu maiores* devono recarsi in città, e non soltanto per le feste maggiori (come la Pasqua), per cooperare e apparire insieme ai loro vescovi in simili occasioni: la visibilità dell'unità fra maggiorenti e gerarchie ecclesiastiche è un bene per i poteri costituiti, laici e ecclesiastici; analogamente presbiteri e diaconi che vivono *in villis* celebrano *in civitate*, insieme al loro vescovo, le festività consacrate. Queste indicazioni provengono da canoni conciliari della prima metà del VI secolo.⁶¹ All'elemento che qui più ci preme, della valorizzazione della città, è plausibilmente legato quello delle esigenze di controllo disciplinare. Da parte sua, la normativa secolare tutelava il ruolo polare della città e l'iniziativa delle sue istituzioni nell'organizzazione degli scambi commerciali e nel ripristino della legalità.⁶² Casi che presuppongono una alterità di fatto fra città come sede del governo civile – e ecclesiastico – e territorio e in parte riportano al fenomeno del ritiro delle aristocrazie urbane nelle campagne.⁶³

⁶¹ Conc. Aurel. del 511, can. 25 (CCL 148, 11); Conc. Clarem. del 535, can. 15 (CCL 148, 109); Conc. Aurel. del 541, can. 3 (CCL 148, 132s.).

⁶² La normativa secolare insiste, contro episodi specifici o prassi più diffuse che andavano in senso contrario, sulla necessità che giustizia e mercati fossero celebrati in città, o per i mercati che fossero altrimenti organizzati secondo un preciso calendario attraverso gli organi politici municipali, che godono in questo ambito di una buona autonomia. Si veda spec. Nov. Val. 15 del 445 d.C., costituzione con la quale viene introdotto il pagamento della siliqua sulle transazioni; cf. *ibidem* § 5: *iubemus enim et in oppidis et in regionibus certo loco ac tempore emendis atque vendendis rebus per honoratorum dispositionem nec non ordinum seu civium sub praesentia moderatoris provinciae manifesta definitione constitui*; per l'importanza della presenza del *cognitor* nelle città, Nov. Maior. 2 (458 d.C.) § 4.

⁶³ Cf. n. 46. Quanto osservo nel testo non implica nessuna particolare presa di posizione complessiva a favore di una opposizione fra città e campagna nella tarda antichità occidentale; sul permanere dell'interdipendenza città-territorio e contro l'idea di una forte 'ruralizzazione' nella Spagna tardoromana cf. Kulikowski 2001; nel V-VI secolo, secondo una recente ampia rassegna archeologica sulle ville dell'aristocrazia iberica, vi sarebbe stato un tangibile fenomeno di abbandono delle ville, con conseguente ripopolamento delle città da parte di una aristocrazia che comunemente di nuovo "vive en la ciudad, o en centros fortificados" (Ariño Gil/Díaz 2002, 93s.). Per un contesto dell'Italia del sud in epoca ostrogota (la celebre fiera di Marcellianum), De Ligt 1993, 62 osserva come non vi sia stato uno spostamento del baricentro economico nella campagna e una deurbanizzazione dei mercati. Sul rapporto fra ritrovamenti monetali e tenuta di mercati rurali o di mercati in città che si andavano ruralizzando cf. ora brevem. Arthur 1999, 176s.; Tabata 2002, 111 e n. 49. Cassiod. Var. 8, 33, 4 segnala che gli schiavi venduti a Marcellianum potevano finire a lavorare in città, presumibilmente presso élites urbane che si può ipotizzare non fossero troppo impoverite: *ad urbana servitia transferuntur*. Alle dinamiche insediative e al rapporto fra città e territorio è stato dedicato un importante convegno dal titolo "Paesaggi e insediamenti in Italia meridionale fra Tardoantico e Alto-medioevo" (Primo Seminario sul Tardoantico e l'Alto-medioevo in Italia meridionale; Foggia, 12-14 febbraio 2004).

Un altro dato che sarebbe interessante capire in profondità nella nostra prospettiva è il censo al di sotto del quale era lecito salvo eccezioni scegliere liberamente il clericato e al di sopra del quale invece non era possibile sottrarsi in alcun modo all'associazione alla curia, con tutti gli obblighi connessi: sotto Valentiniano III (Nov. Val. 3 § 4, del 439) esso era quantificato in 300 solidi, una cifra denotante proprietà ancora piuttosto estese tanto più se si considera che lo stato aveva sempre l'obiettivo di rimpolpare i consigli municipali: evidentemente il legislatore riteneva che questa soglia, che pare appunto relativamente elevata, non fosse incompatibile con l'obiettivo medesimo.⁶⁴ La presenza di rendite importanti nel seno delle élites cittadine è uno dei presupposti (ce ne sono altri: di natura culturale, ovvero i modi di sopravvivenza di un sistema educativo municipale)⁶⁵ che garantivano a personaggi di estrazione curiale di acquisire prestigio e potere nello sfondo della politica locale.

Una discreta documentazione sulle città come realtà capaci – economicamente, socialmente, politicamente – di offrire l'humus per casi anche eclatanti di mobilità sociale e lanci verso carriere laiche di grande levatura proviene dalle Gallie, specialmente grazie alla corrispondenza di Sidonio Apollinare.⁶⁶ Ricorde-

⁶⁴ Jones 1964, 739 con n. 62 (= III 235); Lepelley 1979, 198; Vittinghoff 1994, 227.

⁶⁵ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 318, sottolinea come soprattutto dopo lo stabilirsi dei barbari fossero ormai tramontati i tempi di un sistema scolastico, diciamo pure pubblico, diffuso. È plausibile che le città talvolta continuassero a offrire spazi a collettività più o meno ristrette di scolari ove veniva impartita una educazione liberale e una formazione "professionale": è difficile credere, dinanzi al numero abbastanza ragguardevole di amministratori pubblici, intellettuali e professionisti provenienti da centri di media importanza, che prima la famiglia quindi le grandi metropoli fossero la sede privilegiata per l'apprendimento medio e superiore. D'altra parte se i livelli dell'organizzazione di classi di scolari, sia riuniti privatamente, sia sotto professori ufficialmente stipendiati, potrebbero essere un indice di vitalità civico, è vero che le notizie che possediamo riguardano in netta maggioranza città di spicco, mentre pochissimo sappiamo sugli standard educativi delle piccole città. Per le scuole come anticamera del foro cf. Cassiod. Var. 8, 31, 6: *pueri liberalium scholarum conventu quaerunt, et mox foro potuerint esse digni*; Lepelley 1990, 40s. (organizzazione scolastica nei *Bruttii*?); Medici municipali: Tabata 2002, 138 (Abellinum e Venosa). Un *medicus ab schola graeca*, padre di un palatino delle sacre largizioni a Ravenna: Brown 1984, 77 con n. 26. Scuole e educazione in Gallia e Italia fra V e VI secolo: Riché 1957; Riché 1962, 62–69 (Riché ha ribadito più recentemente, in 1996, 183s., la sua convinzione sulla sopravvivenza delle scuole municipali in Gallia nella seconda metà del V secolo; vd. Sidon. ep. 5, 7; ma anche ep. 4, 11; 3, 1, 1); insegnamento del diritto nelle città della Gallia: Riché 1965 (*non vidi*). Cf. anche Pelletier 1974, 97; Shanzer/Wood 2002, 7. Vita culturale nei capoluoghi bizantini: Falkenhausen 1989, 427–432. Notizie generiche, che potrebbero presupporre un'istruzione impartita privatamente: *liberaliter instituti* che poi scelgono l'esilio in Salviano gub. 5, 21; Severus, Ep. de Judaeis, su Meletius ebreo *non solum latinis sed etiam graecis litteris eruditus* (PL 20, 748); CIL V 3897 (Verona, 532 d.C.), una *puella instructa litteris*.

⁶⁶ In una lettera molto interessante (5, 20), egli fa riferimento alla discussione (*tractatus*) tenuta nella curia di Lione, alla quale Pastore, il destinatario della lettera, era mancato; doveva avvenire la nomina dei componenti di un'ambasciata a Arles: al contrario di Pastore vi erano in città personaggi ambiziosi alla ricerca di una *execrabilis popularitas* che per assumersene la responsabilità brigavano presso i cittadini più influenti (*civium maximi*): se ne fanno clienti, e per mostrare la loro sensibilità agli interessi della collettività di Augustonemetum/Arverni (Clermont) si dichiarano disposti persino a rifondere i costi del viaggio. Aspetti istituzionali e figure sociali del mondo galloromano provinciale e – in special modo – cittadino vengono elencati in

rò solo due nomi: Paeonius, divenuto prefetto pretoriano dopo avere sfruttato al meglio nella sua città di origine un particolare e redditizio talento per la demagogia, lui *non eminentius quam municipaliter natus*; si sposò con una ragazza di livello sociale superiore al suo e proseguì con spregiudicatezza di comportamenti sino a ottenere le più alte dignità (Sidon. ep. 1, 11). Il volitivo Gaudentius, che ottenne dall'imperatore per merito più che per nascita il vicariato *Septem Provinciarum*, e alla fine fu sottoposto all'amara ammirazione dei suoi più ignavi concittadini, gli stessi che avevano fatto parte con lui di un consesso che potrebbe essere stato quello della curia locale (Sidon. ep. 1, 3, 2).⁶⁷

Clermont-Ferrand e le altre città di Sidonio hanno un loro fermento, anche di comunità politiche, ma sono naturalmente in primo luogo sedi episcopali, con le loro faccende ecclesiastiche, le esigenze pastorali, le solennità liturgiche.⁶⁸ La

una celebre invettiva contro ricchi ignoranti invidiosi di tutti, molto letterariamente elaborata ma molto attendibile (e in questo senso generalmente accettata, p.es. Pelletier 1974, 92s., che segue Riché) sul piano dei *Realien*: si allude a una società in cui coesistono ambascerie, mercati, amministrazione della giustizia e del bilancio, clero, nobili e *priores*, sistema dell'educazione, fiscalità e rendite locali ecc. (Sidon. ep. 5, 7); cf. pure il carm. 23, spec. vv. 32-68, elogio di Narbona descritta poeticamente con tutti i suoi apparati: poesia a Consentius narbonense. Cariche municipali (*curator*, *defensor*, *comes*) attestate in Gallia fra V e VI secolo sono evocate in Février 1980, 454s. Sidonio è spesso aspro contro i possessori di ricchezze acquisite di recente, ciò che denota una società non statica; il suo epistolario racchiude vari esempi di ascese sociali, culminate in posti di tutto rilievo nella gerarchia amministrativa, nate e cresciute in città, talvolta anche a ricompensa di meriti e qualità effettive: si veda nel testo e la n. seguente. Che patrimoni cospicui vi fossero all'interno di comunità medie – il *municipiolum* arverno (Sidon. ep. 3, 1, 2) può essere considerata una di queste – lo capiamo del resto dalla presenza di evergeti cristiani come Elaphius, costruttore ex-novo (cf. p.es. ep. 6, 12, 3 a Patiens, ove lo si elogia per i bei restauri, oltre a nuove fondazioni di basiliche) di un battistero e organizzatore di *epulum multiplex* e altro in occasione della dedica, una grande festa con la partecipazione di Sidonio in veste ufficiale e di tanti primati cittadini: Sidon. ep. 4, 15. La consuetudine dei banchetti pubblici non doveva essere una rarità, secondo il nuovo modello di città cristiana, all'epoca di Sidonio, che usa il presente indicativo nel ricordare *sicuti cum epulum festivitas publica facit, prior est in prima mensa conviva postremus ei, qui primus fuerit in secunda* (ep. 7, 12, 4 a Ferreolus).

⁶⁷ *Oscitantem nostrorum civium desidiam vicariano apice transcendit ... venerantur hucusque contemptum ac subitae stupentes dona fortunae quem consessu despiciebant, sede suspiciunt* (ep. 1, 3, 2); cf. su Gaudenzio Sidon. ep. 1, 4, 1-2; 3, 12 (dove è definito *venerabilis*). Altri personaggi: Arvando, prefetto al pretorio di origine plebea (ep. 1, 7); Ecdicius, patrizio e con alti incarichi a corte, comunque concittadino di Sidonio (ep. 3, 3); Donidius, amico di Sidonio, che risulta *spectabilis* ma proprietario di un terreno di famiglia con ricordi di infanzia a Eborolacum (ep. 3, 5); Flavius Nicetius, arverno, *vir ortu clarissimus, privilegio spectabilis, merito inlustris* (ep. 8, 6, ove però il primo titolo di rango menzionato, in una climax di questo tipo, può denotare un'origine clarissima di dimensione, per così dire, locale). Février 1980, 452 considera curiale un Marcellinus giureconsulto galloromano poi consigliere reale dei goti (cf. PLRE II, Marcellinus 5).

⁶⁸ Altri funzionari, nobili, laici in un modo o nell'altro andavano a incidere nella vita della comunità cristiana (posizioni di potere civile spendibili anche in ambito religioso, evergetismo, elezioni, gruppi di pressione che speravano di trarre vantaggio dal tal vescovo ecc.). In ep. 5, 18 Sidonio si complimenta con Atualo, nominato *comes* di Autun degli Edui, dicendosi certo che il neo-insediato saprà agire bene nei suoi confronti. Per raccomandazioni personali o giudiziarie di Sidonio si vedano diverse lettere del VI libro (tutto indirizzato a colleghi presuli); cf. anche p.es. ep. 3, 10; 7, 11, 2 (beneficiario della raccomandazione un *tribunicus vir*); 8, 13, 3.

gente, il popolo cittadino e cristiano è un protagonista del suo epistolario.⁶⁹ Una brevissima ultima notazione: Una novità che andava trovando diffusione era quella delle processioni di preghiera, in situazioni di gravi minacce per la collettività, note come *rogationes*; Sidonio era preoccupato perché i cerimoniali riuscissero meglio che in passato, quando non erano stati seguiti con sufficiente serietà di comportamenti, e scrive a un amico affinché si impegni a parteciparvi. A Vienne, quando il venerabile Mamertus le aveva introdotte,⁷⁰ si erano avuti prodigi, reazioni negative, e persino l'abbandono della città da parte dei *primores* e della plebe urbana (Sidon. ep. 7, 1, 3).⁷¹ L'episodio è conosciuto anche da una omelia di Avito (hom. 6)⁷² dedicata appunto alla genesi dell'istituto gallico-cristiano delle *rogationes*: da questo vescovo di famiglia senatoria sappiamo che Vienne manteneva non molti lustri prima dei suoi tempi un foro in efficienza e una curia di altissimo profilo (della quale Mamertus voleva l'approvazione): *Viennensis senatus, cuius tunc numerosis illustribus curia florebat*. Ritengo qui si tratti di personalità di rango illustre: quello che suscita curiosità non è la loro partecipazione agli affari della città, tenuto conto della sua importanza amministrativa, quello che vorrei suggerire è l'ipotesi che in concreto questo accorpamento di senatori e curiali possa implicare una appartenenza almeno onoraria di questi illustri all'albo municipale, un tipo di documento la cui stessa longevità, ma anche il modo nel quale venne curato, esemplificano bene continuità e discontinuità della storia amministrativa municipale.⁷³

Gli albi municipali hanno in effetti quasi un valore simbolico e riepilogativo, per il discorso che sono andato svolgendo. *Ex albi ordine*, diceva Arcadio Carisio e prima di lui Ulpiano ricordava ai governatori di provincia i criteri redazionali e le sfere di applicazione di questi fondamentali documenti attestati nell'Occidente latino almeno sin verso la metà del VI secolo, di volta in volta affioranti dall'evidenza modesta e frammentaria quasi a rivendicare la non obsolescenza della pratica: nelle leggi di Maggioriano, quindi in Cassiodoro, con riferimento al-

⁶⁹ Delle rarissime testimonianze sidoniane di atto formale di una municipalità civile, sembra significativo il *decretum civium* (forse dei curiali come rappresentanti della collettività nel suo complesso) di Bourges riguardante una crisi politica legata a una successione episcopale alla quale Sidonio avrebbe dovuto porre rimedio (Sidon. ep. 7, 5, 1); da considerare è anche in ep. 5, 20, 1 la discussione (*tractatus*) tenuta nella curia (*civitatis concilium*) di Lione, dal contenuto ricordato sopra alla n. 66. Sul popolo come attore collettivo delle lettere di Sidonio vd. p.es. 3, 2; 7, 8; 8, 11. Bordeaux abitata da *potestates* (fra l'altro): Sidon. ep. 8, 12, 1. Liebeschuetz (2001a, 131s.) ha messo molto bene in risalto alla luce di Gregorio di Tours il ruolo ulteriore dei *cives* sotto i franchi.

⁷⁰ Sul collegamento fra *rogationes* e minacce esterne vd. Pelletier 1974, 189; cf. Shanzer/Wood 2002, 381.

⁷¹ Vd. anche Sidon. ep. 5, 14.

⁷² Su Avito ormai si veda Shanzer/Wood 2002 (3-85, 381-388, introduzione e traduzione inglese della predica sulle rogazioni). Avito era già insediato come vescovo di Vienne verso il 494/496: Shanzer/Wood 2002, 7.

⁷³ Diversamente Riché 1957, 432. D'altra parte Pelletier 1974, 91, sostiene che queste grandi famiglie si occupavano della vita della città "par l'intermédiaire de la curie locale, dont nous ignorons, certes, la composition"; segue (92) poi un elenco di categorie che a suo avviso ne facevano parte fra le quali, in testa, una "aristocracie" non meglio circostanziata.

l'abrasione del nome delle persone che non avevano più diritto a stare nella curia.⁷⁴ È pur vero che una non trascurabile distanza separa le osservazioni dei giuristi che evocavano gli statuti municipali nei quali era previsto quello che si doveva fare e le indicazioni offerteci per esempio dall'albo canosino prodotto diretto dei *duumviri quinquennales*, da quanto già soltanto poco più di un secolo dopo deduciamo dal lacunoso testo epigrafico di Anxanum, nel Sannio, forse il frammento di un albo,⁷⁵ dove l'operazione è condotta per ordine del rettore provinciale, e ancora da quanto su questo solco successivamente viene normatizzato.⁷⁶

Epilogo

Del concetto (e dell'uso terminologico) di declino o sinonimi nello studio della tarda antichità è stata riaffermata la legittimità da LIEBESCHUETZ, in un articolo apparso nello stesso anno della sua opera maggiore sulle città, della quale costituisce un importante corollario metodologico e storiografico (Liebeschuetz 2001b). Non c'è nostalgia verso gli schemi ideali della storiografia "della decadenza" del mondo romano, né per altro verso alcuna concessione a odierni scenari di "clash of civilizations", dove tornano a comparire con un buon carico di scorie tossiche analisi sulle cause interne del decadimento morale e materiale dell'Occidente e sulla conseguente sua debolezza dinanzi alle minacce esterne.⁷⁷ Ci sono invece riflessioni puntuali e toni pacati ma fermi nel denunciare quelle che gli appaiono sovrastrutture ideologiche alla base della formulazione dei

⁷⁴ Dig. 50, 3, 1 (Ulp., de off. procons.); Dig. 50, 4, 18, 11 (Arcadio Carisio); Nov. Maior. 7 § 18; Cassiod. Var. IX 4, cf. Tabata 2002, 53: è al prefetto al pretorio Abundantius che è diretta la richiesta di depennare dall'albo di una città lucana i farenti di un tal personaggio, l'istanza governatoriale non compare apertamente menzionata. Altre attestazioni: Symm. Rel. 38.; Cod. Theod. 12, 1, 142 del 395.

⁷⁵ Parla senza mezzi termini di *album* di Anxanum lo Chastagnol 1978, 39; Dessau inserì l'iscrizione (ILS 6122b) nella categoria degli alba decurionum.

⁷⁶ Nov. Maior. 7 § 18: i governatori devono obbligare i capi-decurioni e seniori delle città a rendere di dominio pubblico, all'occorrenza, liste municipali e albi con la composizione dei collegi: *Inlustris sane et praeclara magnificentia tua* [sc. del prefetto al pretorio Basilus] *omnium provinciarum rectores suis auctoritatibus admonebit, ut principales vel seniores urbium singulorum tam curiarum quam reliquorum corporum albos, quos conscripsit vetustas, proferre compellant obnoxiorum familias sub confectione gestorum capituli sui periculo detegentes, ita ut quae statuta sunt edictis propositis in cunctorum notitiam perferantur.*

⁷⁷ Huntington e il tema della decadenza: Id. 2000, 450-453; 464s. Il riconoscimento del peso di un "mondo a più civiltà" è per Huntington il presupposto perché l'asse Europa-USA sappia difendersi con adeguate strategie dalle eventuali minacce che possano venire alla sua supremazia politica e ai suoi interessi economici da diverse culture e stati in espansione (Islam, Paesi asiatici). La posizione di Huntington (il libro è uscito in lingua originale alcuni anni prima dell'11 settembre 2001) è di un parziale isolazionismo nel senso che è severamente critica nei confronti della convinzione della "rilevanza universale della cultura occidentale" e nei confronti dell'interventismo negli affari dei paesi non-occidentali (Huntington 2000, p.es. 462), pretese immorali e irresponsabili in quanto potrebbero portare a una nuova guerra planetaria (ibid. 460-465).

problemi storici e dell'orientamento degli interessi scientifici.⁷⁸ Desidero aggiungere il mio segnale di perplessità dinanzi alla voga del multiculturalismo e del relativismo culturale, fonte, nelle sue forme più estreme, di interpretazioni del passato e – ciò che non può non stare altrettanto a cuore – di prese di posizione nel presente di un dogmatismo e di un conformismo intellettuale allarmanti.⁷⁹

Il complesso processo di mutamento cui andò incontro l'organizzazione politica e urbanistica della città tardoantica rappresentò dunque nello stesso momento il declino della città romana, visto come l'affievolirsi sino all'evanescenza (non senza inattese 'riemersioni' e differenziazioni regionali nei tempi dei fenomeni in causa) di alcune delle sue componenti e strutture più caratterizzanti. Sono nelle linee essenziali d'accordo con la parabola tracciata da LIEBESCHUETZ dell'evoluzione del governo municipale in Occidente, con più rapidi tratti rispetto all'esame per l'Oriente ma sempre alla luce di un mirabile spoglio di materiali. Intervengono a formare il quadro l'accresciuto ruolo dei rappresentanti del potere centrale in periferia, la nascita e lo sviluppo dell'autorità episcopale, l'emergere di nuove figure di notabili: ma nessuna di queste realtà seppe sostituirsi integralmente – né del resto era questo un suo obiettivo possibile – agli organismi curiali.

Rispetto allo studioso britannico, e ad altri studiosi, accentuerei un po' diversamente la questione della pressione del potere centrale, incarnata in primo luogo dai governatori, sulle città. A tal proposito ho cercato di ripensare quale sia stata l'effettiva incidenza dei governatori sulla vita delle città, da un lato in termini di erosione del potere decisionale e di gestione delle curie nei vari settori amministrativi (fiscalità, giustizia, ordine pubblico, archiviazione ecc.), dall'altro in termini di cedimento di prestigio individuale e collettivo dei tradizionali ceti dirigenti, ciò che avrebbe avuto più generali conseguenze – come di solito si ritiene – sull'evoluzione (declino/trasformazioni) delle istituzioni civiche e sullo stesso assetto dell'edilizia urbana. Mi è parso che in definitiva non si debba escludere né che i curiali abbiano saputo adattarsi alla sostanziale perdita della

⁷⁸ Liebeschuetz 2001b, 5–7, tratta il nesso fra rifiuto della possibile lettura della tarda antichità o di sue parti in termini di crisi e decadenza e influenza della contemporaneità; p.es. "English-speaking scholars as a rule study Late Antiquity for its own interest, but what they find interesting is inevitably influenced by the contemporary intellectual and political priorities. In as much as they have an ideology, most of these historians are multiculturalists ..." (5s.). Un recente autorevole contributo al dibattito, di impostazione favorevole all'impiego del concetto di "trasformazione" perché neutro e privo di "riferimenti di valore", implicante un "atteggiamento di pluralismo culturale" ecc. è Delogu 1999 (le frasi virgolettate alle pagine 3 e 4). Una prospettiva concentrata a enfatizzare gli elementi di trasformazione mi pare evidente abbia contribuito non poco a formare le molecole nucleari dell'"esplosione di tardoantico" rilevata da Giardina 1999. Il saggio di Delogu non è evocato da Liebeschuetz, che si occupa essenzialmente di storiografia anglofona.

⁷⁹ Dentro di essa trovano riparo e poi fuoriescono convinzioni di antropologiche 'differenze' da salvaguardare qualunque tipo di contenuto tali differenze abbiano; fra altri limini e rischi, tali convinzioni a volte finiscono inconsapevolmente coll'assumere i tratti meno nobili del gusto, o del riflesso, per l'esotismo, come acutamente osservato da Khaled Fouam Allam in un intervento su *La Repubblica* del 10 gennaio 2004 ("Il mondo arabo, le libertà e lo specchio dell'Occidente": non sapendo aiutare il mondo arabo a trovare nuove strade politiche l'Europa "si è rifugiata in un culturalismo che tende a riproporre i vecchi schemi dell'esotismo").

direzione della città, per riproporsi come indispensabili a altri livelli, né che almeno per certi aspetti l'accresciuto controllo sulla periferia desse un po' di vigore ai toni della vita civica (non solo delle metropoli provinciali). La funzione di spartiaque avuta, per quest'ordine di problemi, dalla riforma diocleziana, alla quale ci si riferisce anche se in modo non sempre esplicito come rilevante fattore di cambiamento rispetto a una situazione di discreta autonomia e vitalità precedente, è forse sopravvalutata. Un'immagine *ab origine* a tinte troppo nette, o troppo fosche, renderebbe francamente problematico giustificare perché talora persino tre secoli dopo, nel VI secolo avanzato, al di là della varietà della geografia politica, e con tutti gli eventuali conflitti di competenze che potevano determinarsi fra amministratori o politici di vecchia e nuova formazione, le città occidentali – e le loro curie – mantengono responsabilità fiscali e soprattutto notarili abbastanza significative (quantunque la ricchezza di base e la considerazione sociale di cui godevano fossero senza dubbio assai diminuite).⁸⁰ La questione d'altra parte, potrebbe essere osservata anche con un'inversione dell'ordine dei fattori, come intuito da JONES: anche pregresse serie difficoltà avrebbero potuto lasciare spazio all'ingerenza delle autorità provinciali – quando non renderla necessaria.⁸¹

Per l'altro principale argomento affrontato in questa sede la prospettiva di LIEBESCHUETZ è condivisibile. Raffrontando Oriente e Occidente, egli vede scansioni cronologiche differenti nell'ambito di un'analogia di flusso storico, riconosce il maggiore conservatismo occidentale e italico in particolare, ma va al sodo della questione quando parla del fatto che a un certo punto i curiali “no longer were the civic authority”.⁸² Io al massimo avrei una piccola riserva di ordine

⁸⁰ Per richiamare un esempio, Ward Perkins 1998, 376, afferma che i curiali già nel IV secolo avevano perso “much of their power and status”. Sottolineo quel “much”, perché non è chiaro quale sia per Ward-Perkins (a parte una vaga indicazione a un raffronto coi secoli precedenti) il parametro anche cronologico di riferimento, e in particolare come a suo avviso abbia inciso il riassetto diocleziano. Sia nella trattazione di Liebeschuetz 2001a sia nel corso del presente lavoro, piuttosto disseminati, si trovano gli estremi delle fonti occidentali relative al mantenimento di competenze curiali nel VI secolo; si veda anche sotto n. 84.

⁸¹ Jones 1964, 757s.; anche Liebeschuetz 1992, 30. Per altro verso, tendo ad aderire all'idea che la sostanziale fine dell'epigrafia onoraria pubblica relativa agli amministratori civili non sia imputabile soltanto a un fatto di “costume” nel modo di comunicare e che abbia dunque rispecchiato una crisi. Un elemento sul quale invito a ripensare è il rapporto fra attestazioni epigrafiche e dinamicità cittadina (nel IV secolo), nel tentativo di comparare Italia suburbicaria e Italia ‘Annonaria’: in questo senso oggi riporrei i termini del problema, senza dubbio molto difficile, più o meno come in Cecconi 1994, 177–181. Si veda inoltre *supra* n. 19. *Contra*, insieme a altri, Liebeschuetz 2001a, 16. 94s.

⁸² La citazione nel testo (Liebeschuetz 2001a, 126) fa riferimento all'Italia ostrogota (ma evidentemente potrebbe applicarsi a altre realtà statuali), dove la autorità diventa il *comes civitatis*; interessante è l'obbedienza richiesta agli *honorati*, ai possessori e ai curiali nella *Formula honoratis possessoribus et curialibus de comitiva supra scripta* (Cassiod. Var. 7, 27): *Utile est unum semper eligere, cui reliqui debeant oboedire, quia, si voluntas diversorum vaga relinquitur, confusio culparum amica generatur. Itaque civitatis vestrae comitivam per indictionem illam nos illi largitos fuisse noveritis, cui saluberrimam parientiam commodate*. Sul potere del *comes civitatis* nel regno burgundo vd. Avit. ep. 55 (Shanzer/Wood 2002, 291–294, con utili osservazioni).

lessicale, circa l'opportunità di impiegare la formula di governo civico "post-curiale", per un minimo di ambiguità che essa contiene: giacché nel contesto del governo locale non si è mai arrivati a un'incontrastata egemonia o a una sostituzione integrale dei nuovi notabili a spese di una ben distinta (un dato, questo delle identità, non sempre chiaro dalle fonti) organizzazione curiale. Il sistema delle magistrature e dei *munera* corrispondenti rimase a lungo nell'ottica dei poteri pubblici un punto di riferimento ideale, come è stato delineato di recente per l'Africa giustiniana.⁸³ D'altra parte, lasciando tracce più marcate dal V secolo, esso sembra conoscere una semplificazione rispetto alla sua antica articolazione e insieme, come abbiamo visto, una ridefinizione di responsabilità assunte in modo non sempre ben formalizzato da figure politiche e gruppi sociali emergenti, da istanze di matrice romana e ufficiali scelti dai sovrani goti. Tale fenomeno manterrà tutta la sua evidenza anche successivamente.⁸⁴

⁸³ Da Y. Modéran (1996, spec. 97 e 99) sulla base di un'epigrafe di Cululis, dove si nominano *censura, status, cives, ius, moenia, fastus*; in particolare *censura* e *fasti*; avrebbero indicato funzioni ancora presenti e fondanti l'ideologia della città dell'Africa del VI secolo, quelle destinate a compilare per l'*album* municipale le liste magistratuali; cf. sopra n. 24. Per l'ideologia giustiniana secondo cui lo stato cittadino è privilegio vd. anche la trasformazione di una *polis* nella Byzacena di un luogo che gli indigeni chiamavano *Caput Vada*: Modéran 1996, 104s. (fonte il *De aedificiis* di Procopio, 6, 6). Gregorio di Tours ci fornisce in un celebre passaggio della sua *Historia Francorum* (3, 19) una bella rappresentazione dell'idea materiale di città della tarda antichità avanzata. Di Digione descrive la posizione favorevole e la ricchezza agricola, le torri e le mura, le porte. P. Riché ritiene che Gregorio si sia rifatto in primo luogo "à la ville décrite dans l'Apocalypse avec ses portes et ses tours". Egli coglie qui incontestabili indizi del mantenimento della "civilisation urbaine". Aggiungerei come dato di interesse il fatto che l'autore cristiano si stupisce che il centro non abbia ai suoi tempi la qualifica di *civitas* e "rispettosamente" la chiami prima *locus* e poi *castrum*: la sua frase *cur non civitas dicta sit, ignoro* potrebbe alludere all'esistenza di un elenco ufficiale, amministrativo, delle città franche (a somiglianza di quanto sappiamo esisteva in epoca imperiale). Il brano è citato per intero da Riché 1996, 186; cf. Ward-Perkins 1998, 373.

⁸⁴ Menzione di *magistratus* p.es. in Nov. Val. 15 § 4. Le testimonianze di magistrati municipali tradizionali nell'*Edictum Theoderici* (con menzione persino di *duumviri vel quinquennales* e di *duumviri quinquennales* rispettivamente in 52 e 53) sono sopravvivenze interessanti, quantunque ci siano incertezze sullo sfondo geopolitico al quale si riferiscono, specialmente secondo la tesi (tesi tutt'altro che accolta unanimemente) di Vismara 1987, 1-338, che "sottrae" la raccolta all'Italia. Vi sono lunghissimi silenzi e sorprendenti riemersioni di istituzioni municipali in documenti isolati (penso ai papiri ravennati pubblicati da Tjäder, che riguardano non solo Ravenna ma per esempio anche Faenza dove nel 540 è ricordato un *magistratus quinquennalis* e la curia: Pap. Ital. 31 II 6). Preoccupazione per il degrado delle cariche municipali e anche dei *defensores* è manifestata p.es. da Cod. Theod. 8, 12, 8 (415 d.C.) e Cod. Iust. 8, 53, 30 (459 d.C.); leggi orientali, che rispondono però a una crisi certamente ben presente anche nell'Occidente, cf. Jacques, 1990, 241s. Così una miniera di notizie come le *Variae* di Cassiodoro, documento unico nel suo genere, fanno rilevare l'assenza sostanziale di un impianto magistratuale civico (il che non significa assenza di un assetto di curia) mentre ci sono allusioni al permanere dei *munera*. Curatori e principali nella prima metà del VI secolo sono male attestati: però cf. Camodeca cit. sopra n. 33; un caso di *curator rei publicae* di origine gota sembra essere il *vir sublimis* Gudila: CIL XI 268; formula *curatoris civitatis*: Cassiod. Var. 7, 12; a prendere alla lettera questa formula la sopravvivenza della carica si sarebbe sostanziata del compito di *gubernare laudabiles ordines curiae*. AE 1991, 864 è epitafio (quasi certamente di VI secolo) di un *v(ir) s(pectabilis)*, con

Ho tralasciato l'evoluzione che condusse, con una accentuata militarizzazione della società cittadina, alla decomposizione e alla irriconecibilità degli organismi provinciali.⁸⁵ Le forme di questa disaggregazione assumeva connotati molteplici con l'inserimento di nuovi attori, a seguito dei diversi eventi politico-militari e sviluppi amministrativi: nella Gallia e poi nella Spagna visigota, nell'Africa settentrionale e nell'Italia bizantina.⁸⁶

Voglio evocare, da ultimo, il fatto che il settore giudiziario è probabilmente quello nel quale più tangibile è il declino dell'autogoverno municipale. C'è un vasto silenzio, per buona parte della tarda antichità, sul ruolo dei tribunali cittadini – sessioni con emissione di sentenze – presieduti da cariche o giurati appartenenti alla dirigenza locale.⁸⁷ Si ha insomma l'impressione che le persi-

menzione mal contestualizzabile della *curia Comensis*; l'*ordo comensium* è menzionato in Ambr. ep. 5 (CSEL 82, 1). A proposito dei vari gruppi dirigenti delle *civitates* (e dell'ordine delle precedenze fra *possessores* e curiali) Tabata 2002, 35 invita a riflettere su Cassiod. Var. 9, 4 dove un *curialis* sarebbe punitivamente inserito da Atalarico fra i *possessores*; il passo però non è chiaro sulla natura del declassamento. Sui curiali come riscossori delle imposte (e responsabili patrimonialmente dei mancati introiti) vd. Cassiod. Var. 1, 19, 2; 2, 25, 2; 2, 29, 4; 9, 2. *Ordines* menzionati in Gregorio Magno: Tabata 2002, 246 per la raccolta dei luoghi.

⁸⁵ Cecconi 1998, 150–152. Anche la carica di governatore aveva da molto tempo subito un declino di attribuzioni e di importanza nell'economia delle carriere pubbliche; sul rapporto città/provincia cf. Dagron 1987, 155: il vescovo tiene relazioni politiche col centro che consentono alla città di scavalcare la provincia; Cracco Ruggini 1987, 150: la città riguadagna terreno rispetto alle altre ripartizioni territoriali (ma sul rapporto non necessariamente antagonista e inconciliabile fra livello cittadino e provinciale vd. Cecconi 1994, 100–101); Liebeschuetz 2001a, 156.

⁸⁶ Nella Spagna visigota, dai canoni conciliari sentiamo parlare ormai di *iudices locorum* o simili, titolo di funzione che poco ha a che fare col governatore di provincia: Vives 1963, 131: essi presenziano ai sinodi per capire come si tratta *cum populis* senza opprimerli; Vives 1963, 129s. (*iudices territorii*); Vives 1963, 152s. (*iudices* puniscono disordini sessuali). Governatori sopravvissuti ma già precocemente surclassati dagli ufficiali regi nelle città nella Gallia visigota: Liebeschuetz 1992, 20; cf. Harries 2001, 45: "barbarian kings progressively appropriated the functions of the Roman *iudices* (governors-cum-judges) in the territories they controlled". Accostare *iudices* (o *iudices territorii*, *iudices locorum* ecc.) nominati nelle fonti più tarde a cariche riconoscibili è di solito impresa complicata: cf. già Nov. Mai. 2, § 2 linea 54; inoltre Gregorio Magno ep. 9, 105 (*iudices rei publicae* ordinano a mercanti ebrei napoletani acquisto di schiavi in Francia); Liebeschuetz 2001a, 128 n. 165. Harries, loc. cit., in quelli menzionati dal Codice Euriciano (dunque Gallia gotica) vi vede dei potenti locali, anche barbari, che dirigevano arbitrati: resta il fatto che sono in sostanza giudici cittadini e del territorio circostante. A quanto si deduce anche da documenti come il *de fisco barcinonensi* sorgono distretti fiscali di dimensioni inferiori a una provincia ma comprendenti le aliquote di una serie di altre città (Liebeschuetz 2001a, 134s.). Così nell'Africa settentrionale dopo la riconquista l'emergere di principati berberi riduce diverse delle province antiche a pochi isolati insediamenti urbani, nell'Italia bizantina prendono campo governatori militari con capacità di intervento altamente flessibili, talvolta interscambiabili con quelle del vescovo, ma niente affatto esclusivamente militari. Essi operano a livello cittadino come *magistri militum*, *tribuni*, *chartularii*.

⁸⁷ Intendo riferirmi alla tenuta di processi con emissione di sentenze, non dunque alle funzioni definite da Jones 1964, 761 "quasi giudiziarie" quali le autentiche, la registrazione di atti ecc. Qualche debole attestazione: Cod. Theod. 8, 5, 1 (del 315): i magistrati municipali come supplenti del giudice provinciale; ancora Cod. Theod. 8, 12, 3 (323 Seeck): ipotesi di sostituzione del medesimo da parte dei *curatores* o dei *municipales civitatis*. Ma siamo nel primo caso nella fase precedente l'affare giudiziario, ovvero all'arresto del contravventore, nel secondo caso

stenze dei magistrati tradizionali – persistenze testimoniate in modo certo non eclatante – non abbiano implicato il permanere di attribuzioni giurisdizionali per ridotte che fossero state: un ruolo inglobato da una serie di fori alternativi, quello governatoriale, quello del *defensor*, quello dei *comites civitatum*. Sin dal IV secolo sappiamo dell'*audientia* episcopale.⁸⁸ In talune circostanze – e mi riferisco in particolare alle cosiddette *causae liberales*, quelle cioè che decidevano sullo status individuale delle persone – i tribunali dei vescovi assorbivano poteri nel passato alto e medio imperiale affidati a entità sovramunicipali, come i pretori o i presidi di provincia.⁸⁹ Competenze e procedure che si intrecciano, dai movimenti desultorii, vischiosità dei processi politico-amministrativi. Itinerario di crisi e trasformazioni, sino alla genesi della città post-romana.⁹⁰

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siamo di nuovo al limite fra affare giudiziario e questione notarile. Più significativo forse Cassiod. Var. 8, 31 e i *negotia Spoletinorum*, con allusioni al tribunale locale fatte senza chiarire chi fossero i giudici; cf. Lepelley 1990, 40s.

⁸⁸ Bibliografia citata alla n. 45.

⁸⁹ Vismara 1995. Un aspetto vicino è la gestione dei carceri, per la quale pure i vescovi possono svolgere funzioni di supervisorie significative: Soraci 2001, 597 con n. 259.

⁹⁰ Il titolo di questa ricerca ricalca quello del primo volume dedicato alla tarda antichità nella *Storia di Roma* (Einaudi); l'uso del plurale è anche nel mio caso deliberato; credere, con Liebeschuetz, che si possa parlare, in termini asettici, di un "decline and fall", di una parabola complessiva che condusse alla scomparsa della città romana (e ovviamente non della città *tout-court*), non esclude, al contrario impone, che vi debba essere consapevolezza del fatto che per diversi aspetti caratterizzanti essa conobbe un percorso non rettilineo, fatto di arretramento e crescita, di "crises et redressements" (cf. le notazioni di Carrié 1999, 9, relative non alla città, per la quale non crediamo comunque lo studioso francese impiegherebbe categorie gibboniane, ma all'impero romano nel suo insieme).

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Le christianisme et l'évolution des institutions municipales du Bas-Empire: l'exemple du *defensor civitatis**

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Le 21 janvier 409, l'empereur Honorius (395–423) adresse à Caecilianus, préfet du prétoire d'Italie et d'Illyricum, une constitution concernant deux sujets, la procédure judiciaire et la *defensio civitatis*. Le Code Théodosien, dans son état actuel de conservation, en inclut six extraits, dont quatre se retrouvent dans le Code Justinien.¹ Ce dernier conserve en outre un extrait dont il n'y a pas trace dans le Code Théodosien.² Le premier paragraphe de cet extrait stipule que seuls les orthodoxes sont habilités à remplir la fonction de *defensor civitatis*, et confie la désignation de ce dernier à un corps composé de cinq catégories de la société municipale: évêque, clergé, *honorati*, *possessores* et curiales. Un demi siècle plus tard, en 458, la Novelle 3 de Majorien (457–461), qui est consacrée au même sujet, énonce une procédure très différente: le corps électoral ne comprend désormais que trois catégories laïques de la population citadine (*municipes*, *honorati*, *plebs*), et le libellé, en l'état actuel de sa conservation tout au moins, ignore le critère d'orthodoxie.³ Un siècle après la promulgation de la constitution d'Honorius, en 505, les deux dispositions relatives à la désignation du *defensor civitatis* se retrouvent dans une loi adressée par Anastase I^{er} (491–518) à Eustathios, préfet du prétoire d'Orient.⁴

A priori, l'absence d'éléments chrétiens dans la Novelle 3 de Majorien a de quoi surprendre: l'évêque et le clergé, apparemment déjà associés à l'élection du *defensor civitatis* à l'époque d'Honorius, ne sont en effet pas inclus dans le corps électoral qui, de surcroît, n'est plus tenu de limiter son choix aux seuls orthodoxes. Non moins curieux semble le fait qu'Honorius et Anastase formulent tous deux la procédure de désignation à peu près dans les mêmes termes. Au premier abord, la similitude de formules semble témoigner de l'influence de la loi promulguée à Ravenne sur la rédaction de la deuxième, rédigée à Constantinople un

* Je remercie vivement mon amie et collègue Sylvie Honigman, qui a bien voulu lire cet article et en améliorer le style.

¹ En voici la liste d'après Seeck 1919, 316: CTh 9.2.5 (= CJ 1.55.7; datée de 405!); CTh 9.2.6; CTh 9.31.1; CTh 9.36.2 (= CJ 9.44.2); CTh 11.8.3 (= CJ 1.55.9); CTh 11.39.13 (= CJ 4.20.11). Dans son édition du Code Justinien (p. 40 n. 10; cf. Seeck, loc. cit.), P. Krueger rattache à la même constitution plusieurs extraits adressés au même préfet le 25 janvier de la même année, mais cette suggestion ne s'impose pas.

² CJ 1.55.8.

³ Nov. Mai. 3. L'éditeur signale une lacune au milieu de la phrase qui traite des qualités exigées du *defensor civitatis* (p. 160, 6; voir aussi l'apparat critique).

⁴ CJ 1.4.19 (= CJ 1.55.11).

siècle plus tard. Or ces considérations ne s'imposent que pour autant que l'on accepte comme authentiques (ce que fait la quasi totalité des savants) les dispositions que le Code Justinien attribue à Honorius.

Dans une monographie publiée en 1988, F.M. AUSBÜTTEL a contesté cette conception des choses et proposé une explication différente de la ressemblance entre la constitution d'Honorius non reproduite dans le Code Théodosien et celle d'Anastase: c'est avec cette dernière sous les yeux que les rédacteurs du Code Justinien auraient réécrit la constitution d'Honorius.⁵ Suivant cette solution, injustement négligée par les recherches ultérieures sur les institutions municipales du Bas-Empire, la Novelle 3 de Majorien n'offrirait aucun revirement par rapport à la législation de ses prédécesseurs. Les pages qui suivent se proposent d'examiner de près les dispositions d'Honorius et d'Anastase ainsi que la solution proposée par AUSBÜTTEL. Les deux textes sont ici reproduits, à l'exception du deuxième paragraphe de la loi d'Honorius, qui n'a pas d'équivalent dans celle d'Anastase. Les termes communs sont imprimés en caractères gras.

CJ 1.55.8, pr. (409):

Defensores ita praecipimus ordinari, ut sacris orthodoxae religionis imbuti mysteriis reverentissimorum episcoporum nec non clericorum et honoratorum ac possessorum et curialium decreto constituentur: de quorum ordinatione referendum est ad illustrissimam praetorianam potestatem, ut litteris eiusdem magnificae sedis eorum solidetur auctoritas.

CJ 1.4.19 = CJ 1.55.11 (505):

Iubemus eos tantummodo ad defensorum curam peragendam ordinari, qui sacrosanctis orthodoxae religionis imbuti mysteriis hoc imprimis sub gestorum testificatione, praesente quoque religiosissimo fidei orthodoxae antistite, per depositiones cum sacramenti religione celebrandas patefecerint. ita enim eos praecipimus ordinari, ut reverentissimorum episcoporum nec non clericorum et honoratorum ac possessorum et curialium decreto constituentur.

Chacun des deux textes inclut des précisions qui sont omises dans l'autre. Ainsi, seul le premier exige la ratification de l'élection du *defensor civitatis* par la préfecture du prétoire, tandis que le deuxième ordonne que l'orthodoxie des candidats, tenus de prêter serment par écrit, soit certifiée par l'évêque. On constate cependant des ressemblances qu'il est difficile d'attribuer au hasard. La dépendance est manifeste, mais dans quel sens?

Il est parfois admis que c'est la constitution d'Honorius qui a servi de modèle à celle d'Anastase.⁶ Cette hypothèse, considérée comme allant de soi par ses partisans, impliquerait tout d'abord qu'une mesure d'Honorius sur la désignation des *defensores civitatum* ait été disponible à Constantinople en 505, date de la

⁵ Ausbüttel 1988, 37-38.

⁶ Voir, par exemple: Ganghoffer 1963, 172; Coleman-Norton 1966 II, n° 311, p. 524-525 et n. 3; III, n° 541, p. 949-950 et n. 3; Vittinghoff 1982, 125-126 et n. 81; Mannino 1984, 146-147; Frakes 2001, 193.

constitution adressée au préfet Eustathios par l'empereur Anastase. De fait, l'inclusion de CJ 1.55.8 dans le Code Justinien semble confirmer cette hypothèse. Cette inclusion implique par ailleurs que cette disposition se trouvait dans le texte intégral du Code Théodosien. Bien que contestée par J. DECLAREUIL et F. DE MARTINO, qui pensent à une omission délibérée de CJ 1.55.8 par les rédacteurs du Code Théodosien,⁷ la provenance de cette constitution ne fait guère de doute. Rappelons que le projet lancé par Théodose II en 429 devait inclure l'ensemble de la législation impériale depuis Constantin I^{er} (*cunctas ... constitutiones ... quas Constantinus inclitus et post eum divi principes nosque tulimus edictorum viribus aut sacra generalitate subnixas*).⁸ De plus, la version intégrale de ce Code est, selon toute probabilité, la seule source utilisée par les rédacteurs du Code Justinien pour la législation des années 311–437.⁹ On constate par ailleurs que le titre *De defensoribus civitatum* (1.29) est transmis de façon défectueuse par la tradition manuscrite du Code Théodosien,¹⁰ et que la huitième constitution, la dernière à être conservée (par la tradition indirecte du Breviarium Alarici), date de 392; que ce titre ait inclus plusieurs constitutions postérieures à cette date et désormais perdues est donc tout à fait plausible.¹¹

L'hypothèse selon laquelle Honorius serait la source d'Anastase impliquerait également que les collaborateurs de ce dernier aient consulté le Code Théodosien afin d'y trouver des mesures dignes d'être reprises. Au premier abord, le fait que la législation actuellement connue des prédécesseurs d'Anastase à Constantinople ne s'occupe guère du rôle de la cité dans la désignation du *defensor civitatis* pourrait servir d'argument en faveur de cette hypothèse. Il faut pourtant souligner qu'à l'exception du cas douteux de CJ 1.4.19 (= 1.55.11), aucune loi d'Anastase n'atteste la consultation du Code Théodosien. En fait, les renvois de cet empereur à la législation de ses prédécesseurs ne remontent pas au-delà des dernières années du règne de Théodose II (408–450). En voici la liste:

- 1) CJ 11.43.11: renvoi à CJ 11.43.5 (Théodose II; 439/41)
- 2) CJ 12.19.11: renvoi à CJ 12.19.7 (Théodose II; 444?)¹²
- 3) CJ 5.17.9: renvoi à CJ 5.17.8 (Théodose II; 449)
- 4) CJ 8.53.32: renvoi à CJ 8.53.30 (Léon I^{er}; 459)
- 5) CJ 10.32.66: renvoi à CJ 10.32.64 (Zénon; 476/80 ou 484)¹³
- 6) CJ 12.10.2: renvoi à CJ 12.21.8 (Zénon; 484)

Les trois lois de Théodose II, on le voit, sont postérieures à la promulgation du Code Théodosien vers la fin de 437.¹⁴ Mais l'intérêt de ces renvois ne se limite

⁷ Declareuil 1911, 295 n. 1; De Martino 1975, 505.

⁸ *Gesta senatus* 4 = CTh 1.1.5. Cf. Honoré 1998, 142–149; Matthews 2000, 57–71.

⁹ Rotondi 1922, 185–216.

¹⁰ Pour la tradition manuscrite du premier livre, voir Matthews 2000, 101–104; pour le titre en question, voir Frakes 2001, 93–94.

¹¹ Dans l'édition partielle du Code Théodosien par P. Krueger, parue à Berlin en 1923–1925, CJ 1.55.8 est la neuvième constitution du titre 1.29, tandis que CJ 1.55.4 (385), également absente dans l'édition Mommsen, est la constitution 5a.

¹² Pour la date, voir PLRE II Nomus 1.

¹³ Pour la date, voir Laniado 2002, 37 n. 96.

¹⁴ Datation récemment proposée par Barnes 2001, 684–685.

pas à cela. L'analyse des six paires de textes de cette liste révèle en effet qu'à l'exception de CJ 10.32.66, les lois d'Anastase se gardent d'imiter le style des lois auxquelles elles font référence.¹⁵ Par conséquent, on est en droit de se demander si l'existence de parallèles de style et de terminologie n'est pas en réalité une objection à l'hypothèse selon laquelle Honorius aurait servi de modèle à Anastase dans le cas de la constitution concernant la *defensio civitatis*. Une imitation servile de ce genre semble plutôt incompatible avec les prétentions littéraires des *quaestores sacri palatii*, que l'on peut distinguer le plus souvent les uns des autres par leur style.¹⁶

Illustrons ces remarques par un cas concret, dans lequel l'influence d'une loi occidentale du début du V^e siècle sur une loi orientale du VI^e siècle est incontestable. En 531, Justinien adopte une mesure qu'il attribue d'une manière explicite aux empereurs Arcadius (395–408) et Honorius, tout en se demandant pourquoi elle est tombée en désuétude.¹⁷ Il s'agit d'une constitution de 408, adressée par Honorius à Théodore, préfet du prétoire d'Italie et d'Illyricum.¹⁸ C'est sans doute grâce à son inclusion dans le Code Théodosien qu'elle est disponible aux collaborateurs de Justinien qui, loin d'essayer de la traduire en grec ou d'en imiter le style, en résument la disposition principale. Cet exemple permet de supposer que, si une constitution d'Honorius lui avait vraiment servi de modèle, Anastase y aurait fait explicitement référence, tout en formulant son propre texte dans un style différent.

Comme on l'a déjà vu ci-dessus, AUSBÜTTEL suppose que les rédacteurs du Code Justinien, qui étaient autorisés à modifier le texte des dispositions impériales afin d'éliminer les contradictions, se sont servi de la disposition plus récente d'Anastase pour réécrire la constitution d'Honorius relative à la désignation des *defensores civitatum*, dont il n'est plus possible de reconstituer avec précision le règlement originel.¹⁹ Les deux constitutions, on l'a vu, diffèrent cependant l'une de l'autre sur certains points, preuve de ce que les rédacteurs du Code Justinien n'ont pas cherché à harmoniser les deux dispositions d'une manière systématique; ils se sont plutôt limités à mettre à jour les éléments qui n'étaient plus d'actualité dans la première.²⁰

¹⁵ Outre ce cas, où Anastase ajoute une précision à une disposition de Zénon, son prédécesseur immédiat, noter le cas de CJ 2.7.24 (517), qui reproduit d'une manière plus ou moins exacte le texte de la Constitution CJ 2.7.22 promulguée par ce même empereur douze ans auparavant.

¹⁶ Voir notamment Honoré 1998, 11–23.

¹⁷ CJ 1.3.52.5: Πρὸς τοῦτοις κάκεινο δίκαιον εἶναι καὶ κρατεῖν καὶ πολιτεύεσθαι θεσπίζομεν, ὅπερ τεθὲν ἐξ ἀρχῆς καὶ πολιτευσάμενον οὐκ ἴσμεν ὅπως παρώπται. μεμνήμεθα γὰρ Ἀρκαδίου καὶ Ὀνωρίου τῶν τῆς εὐσεβοῦς λήξεως ἐντυχόντες διατάζει... Ce que Justinien présente comme une constitution tombée en désuétude n'est en fait que l'omission de cette même constitution de la première édition du Code Justinien (529): voir Laniado 2002, 55 et n. 82.

¹⁸ CTh 16.2.39 (408).

¹⁹ Ausbüttel 1988, 37–38. J'ai déjà adopté cette proposition ailleurs (Laniado 2002, 172 et n. 10), sans fournir d'arguments.

²⁰ Noter que la constitution *Haec* (528) autorise les rédacteurs à supprimer les éléments tombés en désuétude (§ 2).

À la différence de la constitution d'Anastase, celle d'Honorius stipule la ratification de la désignation du *defensor civitatis* par la préfecture du prétoire. Les rédacteurs du Code Justinien n'ont pas supprimé cette disposition, qui a toutes chances de remonter à la promulgation originelle,²¹ pour la simple raison qu'elle est encore d'actualité pour l'empire protobyzantin dans la première moitié du VI^e siècle, les préfets du prétoire étant alors toujours responsables de l'administration provinciale et municipale. En témoigne la reprise de cette disposition par la Nouvelle 15 (535) de Justinien.²² Par ailleurs, la constitution d'Honorius contient un paragraphe qui insiste sur le devoir des *defensores civitatum* de rapporter aux hauts dignitaires de l'empire (préfets du prétoire, *magistri militum*, *magistri officiorum*, *comites sacrarum largitionum*, *comites rei privatae*) toute transgression de la loi (*contra publicam disciplinam*) commise par qui que ce soit au détriment des *possessores*,²³ ces derniers étant protégés des abus des agents fiscaux par un autre extrait de la même constitution.²⁴ Il n'y a là rien d'anachronique pour l'Occident sous le règne d'Honorius ni de désuet pour l'empire d'Orient des premières années du règne de Justinien. Quant à la précision qui est propre à la constitution d'Anastase, le devoir des candidats de soumettre leur orthodoxie à l'approbation de l'évêque par le biais d'un serment, rien ne permet de la faire remonter à l'époque d'Honorius.

Examinons maintenant les éléments qui sont communs aux deux constitutions, à commencer par le corps électoral. L'étude d'autres mesures de ce genre aux V^e–VI^e siècles suggère fortement que la juxtaposition des catégories chargées de la désignation du *defensor civitatis*, telles qu'elles sont énumérées dans les deux constitutions, est bien postérieure au règne d'Honorius.²⁵ L'exemple de Valentinien II (375–392), qui, dans une constitution adressée en 387 à Eusignius, préfet du prétoire d'Italie et d'Illyricum, confie la désignation des *defensores* aux cités elles-mêmes²⁶, permet cependant de supposer qu'Honorius a fait lui aussi intervenir les instances locales dans la même procédure. La constitution de Valentinien II, la seule mesure de ce genre à être incluse dans le Code Théodosien, ne se prononce toutefois pas sur la composition du corps électoral. Ce fait a dû gêner l'auteur de l'*interpretatio*, qui énumère deux catégories (*cives* et *universi*).²⁷ Honorius a-t-il éprouvé le besoin, en 409, de fournir les détails qui manquaient dans le précédent établi par Valentinien II?

²¹ Les préfets du prétoire jouent un rôle dans la nomination des *defensores civitatum* déjà d'après la législation de Valentinien et Valens: voir CTh 1.29.1 et CTh 1.29.4; pour le problème épineux de la datation de ces lois, voir Frakes 2001, 94–104.

²² Just. Nov. 15.1.1 (éd. R. Schoell/G. Kroll, *Novellae, Corpus Iuris Civilis III*, Berlin 1895, p. 111). Dans son résumé de cette Nouvelle, un juriste du dernier quart du VI^e siècle fait remarquer: Τὸ περὶ τῶν ἐκδίκων γινόμενον ψήφισμα κυρούσθω ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπαρχῶν, ὁμοίως φησὶ καὶ βί. α' τοῦ κώδ. τι. νε' διατ. η' (Theodori Scholastici Breviarium Novellarum, éd. C.E. Zachariae, *Anekdotia III*, Leipzig 1843, p. 24, § 2).

²³ CJ 1.55.8.1. Sur ce paragraphe, voir Mannino 1984, 96–101.

²⁴ CTh 11.8.3 = CJ 1.55.9. Cf. Mannino 1984, 101–105.

²⁵ Pour les références juridiques pertinentes, voir Laniado 2002, 171–177.

²⁶ CTh 1.29.6: *Hi potissimum constituentur defensores, quos decretis elegerint civitates*. Sur cette loi, voir Frakes 2001, 129–130, 134–135, 162–164.

²⁷ CTh 1.29.6 interpr.: *Hi instituantur civitatum defensores, quos consensus civium et*

L'inclusion des *curiales* dans un corps électoral n'aurait rien de surprenant dans une loi du début du V^e siècle, époque où la curie est toujours l'institution municipale de loin la plus importante. C'est plutôt la relégation des *curiales* à la fin de la liste qui ferait alors difficulté. Par contre, ceci n'a rien d'étonnant à l'époque d'Anastase.²⁸ Quant aux *honorati* (dignitaires et fonctionnaires impériaux, effectifs ou honoraires, domiciliés dans les cités)²⁹ et aux *possessores* (propriétaires et notables municipaux qui ne font pas partie de la curie),³⁰ un parallèle intéressant du règne d'Honorius nous est fourni par la lettre que cet empereur adresse en 418 à Agricola, préfet du prétoire des Gaules, au sujet de la convocation du concile du diocèse civil des Sept Provinces. En voici la disposition pertinente: "que les *honorati*, les propriétaires (*possessores*) ou les juges de chaque province sachent qu'ils doivent chaque année tenir leur Conseil dans la ville d'Arles". Bien qu'omis dans ce paragraphe, les *curiales* ne sont pas écartés de ce concile, car la sanction du texte inflige une amende de trois livres d'or aux *honorati* et aux *curiales* absentéistes.³¹ Cette lettre, il est vrai, diffère à plus d'un titre de la constitution relative à la *defensio civitatis*, car il s'agit à la fois d'une autre circonscription administrative, la préfecture des Gaules, et d'un autre cadre institutionnel, l'assemblée d'un diocèse civil. Elle suggère néanmoins qu'un corps électoral composé de *curiales*, *honorati* et *possessores* n'est pas un anachronisme sous Honorius, même si le nombre et l'importance des *honorati* varient selon la cité.³²

L'épigraphie fait connaître d'autres documents susceptibles de contribuer à la présente discussion, en particulier deux dédicaces déjà signalées par AUSBÜTTEL.³³ À Venafrum, la curie (*ordo*) et le peuple (*populus*) érigent une inscription en l'honneur de Maecius Felix, *vir perfectissimus* et *defensor* de la curie (*ordo*), du *possessor* (au singulier) et du peuple de la cité.³⁴ À Ravenne, la curie (*ordo*) et les citoyens (*cives*) honorent Caius Marius Eventius en reconnaissance de ses bienfaits envers la curie (*ordo*), les *possessores* et les *cives*.³⁵ Dans les deux cas, les *possessores* apparaissent comme une catégorie particulière de la population citadine, mais ils ne comptent pas au nombre des dédicataires.³⁶ L'incertitude chronologique de ces témoignages épigraphiques ne nous permet malheureusement pas d'en tirer argument pour ou contre l'hypothèse selon laquelle les *possessores* faisaient partie du corps électoral tel que l'envisageait la version originelle de la constitution d'Honorius.

subscriptio universorum elegisse cognoscitur; les *universi* ne seraient que les *curiales* d'après Mannino 1984, 81–82 et n. 18.

²⁸ Cf. Liebeschuetz 2001, 104–111; Laniado 2002, 35–36.

²⁹ Sur les *honorati*, voir Chastagnol 1987, 57–60.

³⁰ Voir Laniado 2002, 180–185.

³¹ MGH Epp. III/1, n° 8, p. 13–15; Haenel 1857, n° 1171; trad. Chastagnol 1976, n° 37, p. 157–159. Pour le contexte historique, Chastagnol 1973, 23–40. Pour les assemblées des provinces et des diocèses, voir Martini 2001, 709–717 (avec bibliographie).

³² Liebeschuetz 2001, 105 n. 7; Laniado 2002, 164–166.

³³ Ausbüttel 1988, 251 n. 87.

³⁴ CIL X 4863. Cf. PLRE I Felix 9 (deuxième moitié du IV^e siècle).

³⁵ CIL XI 15. Cf. PLRE II Eventius 2 (fin du IV^e siècle ou début du V^e siècle).

³⁶ Cf. Laniado 2002, 182.

Qu'en est-il de l'évêque ? En 401, un concile ecclésiastique réuni à Carthage décide à l'unanimité (*universis visum est*) de solliciter des empereurs de faire nommer des *defensores* "par les soins des évêques", en vue de la protection des pauvres.³⁷ En dépit de l'affirmation de la rubrique de ce canon (*De defensoribus ecclesiarum ab imperatore poscendis*), il doit s'agir des *defensores civitatum*.³⁸ R.M. FRAKES pose la question de savoir s'il ne faut pas attribuer l'inclusion de l'évêque dans le corps électoral tel qu'il est constitué par CJ 1.55.8 à la sollicitation des prélats réunis à Carthage,³⁹ hypothèse qui nous semble contestable.⁴⁰ On constate par ailleurs que plusieurs lois de la deuxième moitié du V^e siècle n'accordent à l'évêque aucun rôle dans la vie municipale. C'est le cas non seulement de la Nouvelle 3 de Majorien, mais aussi d'une loi de Léon 1^{er} (457-474) sur la vente des biens municipaux. Les *curiales*, les *honorati* et les *possessores* doivent y assister et même prêter serment sur la Bible (*propositis sacrosanctis scripturis*), mais aucune mention n'est faite de l'évêque,⁴¹ dont le rôle dans l'inspection des finances municipales sera plus tard prépondérant.⁴² Un autre exemple est fourni par une loi de Zénon (474-491) ordonnant aux gouverneurs de prolonger de 50 jours leur séjour dans leur province d'exercice à leur sortie de charge afin de donner le temps aux provinciaux de porter d'éventuelles accusations à leur encontre. L'*officium* du gouverneur ainsi que les *curiales* et le *defensor civitatis* sont responsables de l'application de cette innovation, mais l'évêque, qui sera chargé de cette tâche par la législation du VI^e siècle, n'est point mentionné.⁴³

Pour en revenir au rôle de l'évêque dans la procédure de désignation des magistrats municipaux, les premières références juridiques que l'on a – mise à part CJ 1.55.8 – datent du règne d'Anastase. D'après une loi qu'il est impossible de dater avec précision (491/505), l'élection du *sitônès* est l'affaire de l'évêque et des premiers d'entre les *possessores*: (τῶν ἐν τοῖς κτήτοσι πρωτεύόντων)⁴⁴ Sous ce même empereur, le préfet du prétoire d'Orient Hiérios (494-496) confie

³⁷ Concilia Africae (a. 345-525; éd. C. Munier, CCL 149, Turnhout 1974, p. 202, canon 75): *Ab imperatoribus universis visum est postulandum, propter afflictionem pauperum, quorum molestiis sine intermissione fatigatur ecclesia, ut defensores eis adversus potentias divitum cum episcoporum provisione delegentur*. Les traductions anglaises proposées par Frakes 2001, 181 ("It has been seen that it must be demanded from the universal emperors") et Humfress 2001, 569 ("Resolved, let it be requested of the universal emperors") pour la première phrase du canon sont erronées, car le datif *universis*, qui est le complément de *visum est*, qualifie les participants du concile et non les empereurs. Noter que cette interprétation est corroborée par la version grecque de ce canon, qui date de c. 550 (Joannou 1962, 316).

³⁸ Frakes 2001, 181-184. Le texte de la rubrique a induit en erreur Humfress 2001, 569-570.

³⁹ Frakes 2001, 185.

⁴⁰ Cf. Jacques 1986, 56: "Il ne paraît pas qu'ils aient été entendus, à tout le moins que des défenseurs aient été nommés régulièrement dans les cités de l'Afrique du nord, puisque moins de vingt ans après, Augustin faisait une démarche comparable".

⁴¹ CJ 11.32.3.2 (472).

⁴² Voir notamment CJ 1.4.26 (530); Just. Nov. 128 (545; éd. Schoell/Kroll, Novellae, p. 636-646).

⁴³ CJ 1.49.1 (479). Cf. Laniado 2002, 236.

⁴⁴ CJ 1.4.17 = 10.27.3, pr. Voir aussi Sirks 1996, 101-106.

l'élection du *zygostate* (peseur de monnaies), aux évêques (au pluriel), aux habitants (*oikêtores*) et aux *possessores* (*ktêtores*).⁴⁵ Désormais, la présence de l'évêque est de règle dans les corps électoraux.⁴⁶ Tout cela suggère que l'évêque ne jouait aucun rôle dans l'élection du *defensor civitatis*, ni dans la constitution promulguée par Honorius en 409, ni dans l'extrait – aujourd'hui perdu – que les rédacteurs du Code Théodosien avaient incorporé au titre 1.29 une trentaine d'années plus tard. Cela peut expliquer pourquoi cette loi est absente du titre *De episcopali audientia* du Code Justinien (1.4), tandis que les rédacteurs de ce Code ont incorporé la constitution d'Anastase à la fois à ce titre (CJ 1.4.19) et au titre *De defensoribus civitatum* (CJ 1.55.11).⁴⁷

Ce résultat n'est pas sans conséquences pour l'interprétation de la lettre 22* d'Augustin, témoignage littéraire important publié pour la première fois en 1981.⁴⁸ L'évêque et les habitants d'Hippone souhaitent qu'un fonctionnaire (*militans*) du nom d'Ursus soit nommé *defensor* de leur cité, mais ils demandent à savoir si la loi exige de nommer un homme de condition privée (*privatus*).⁴⁹ FRAKES est d'avis que l'auteur de cette lettre ignorait l'existence de la constitution promulguée par Honorius en 409, et n'était pas au fait non plus de la législation récente.⁵⁰ Or on peut douter que la consultation des lois antérieures à la date de cette lettre (mars 420) ait été susceptible de lever les doutes d'Augustin et de ses concitoyens. Plusieurs lois du IV^e siècle, il est vrai, envisagent la nomination d'anciens gouverneurs et fonctionnaires,⁵¹ qui étaient considérés comme des hommes privés une fois leur service achevé,⁵² mais aucune ne limite de façon dépourvue d'ambiguïté le recrutement des *defensores civitatum* aux seuls *privati*.

En ce qui concerne le clergé, la première loi d'authenticité incontestable qui le fasse intervenir dans l'élection d'un magistrat municipal est justement la constitution d'Anastase de 505 sur la *defensio civitatis*. Le clergé y occupe la seconde place sur la liste, juste après l'évêque. Par la suite, on retrouve le clergé dans d'autres lois relatives à l'activité des corps électoraux et représentatifs dans la vie municipale.⁵³

⁴⁵ *Edicta Praefectorum Praetorio* (éd. C.E. Zachariae, *Anekdotia III*, Leipzig 1843, p. 269, n° 7). On trouve le même corps électoral dans une autre version du même édit préfectoral (*ibid.* p. 258, n° 3).

⁴⁶ Laniado 2002, 173–176.

⁴⁷ Noter que CJ 1.55.11 est absente des manuscrits latins du Code Justinien. Sa restitution dans l'édition Krüger (p. 91 n. 18) s'appuie sur le témoignage d'un recueil juridique grec de la deuxième moitié du VI^e siècle: voir *Collectio Tripartita. Justinian on Religious and Ecclesiastical Affairs*, éd. N. van der Wal/B.H. Stolte, Groningen 1994, 1.3, *paratitlon* 35, p. 53 (= PG 138, 1160A).

⁴⁸ Sur cette lettre, voir Lepelley 1982, 453–455 (repris dans Lepelley 2001, 366–367); Jacques 1986; Lepelley 1998, 29–31; Frakes 2001, 189–192.

⁴⁹ Éd. J. Divjak, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera: Epistolae ex duobus codicibus nuper in lucem prolatae*, CSEL 88, Wien 1981, p. 115, § 4.

⁵⁰ Frakes 2001, 191–192.

⁵¹ CTh 1.29.1; 1.29.3–4.

⁵² Cf. Jacques 1986, 67–68.

⁵³ Laniado 2002, 173–176.

Outre les diverses catégories du corps électoral, il est nécessaire d'examiner de près un autre élément figurant à la fois dans la constitution d'Honorius et dans celle d'Anastase: l'orthodoxie des candidats. La périphrase utilisée, à savoir *sacrosanctis/sanctis orthodoxae religionis imbuti mysteriis*, n'est attestée, en dehors de ces lois, ni dans le Code Théodosien, ni dans le Code Justinien. Toutefois, il existe quelques expressions analogues:⁵⁴ l'une d'entre elles, *mysteriis Christianis imbuti*, apparaît justement dans une loi d'Honorius.⁵⁵ La date de cette mesure (1^{er} avril 409) permet de se demander si elle n'est pas de la plume du questeur qui est également l'auteur de la constitution sur la *defensio civitatis* adressée au préfet Caecilianus le 21 avril de la même année.⁵⁶ Ce parallèle n'est pourtant pas suffisant pour attribuer à Honorius le critère de l'orthodoxie des candidats. Il est vrai que, dès 395, deux lois promulguées en Orient avaient défendu la fonction publique (*militia*) aux hérétiques,⁵⁷ mais leur validité pour l'Occident n'est pas prouvée.⁵⁸ En outre, la formule *sacrosanctis/sanctis orthodoxae religionis imbuti mysteriis* écarte de la *defensio civitatis* non seulement les hérétiques, mais aussi les païens, les Juifs, les Samaritains et même les catéchumènes. En Occident, il est vrai, une obscure loi de 404 prive de toutes les fonctions publiques (*omni militia*) les Juifs et les Samaritains "qui se flattent d'avoir le privilège de commissaires spéciaux (*agentes in rebus*)", mais il doit s'agir d'une mesure à portée limitée, peut-être motivée par une tentative d'usurpation de la qualité d'*agens in rebus*.⁵⁹ En 408 le service du palais (*intra palatium militare*) est interdit aux "ennemis de la secte catholique", terme qui renvoie plutôt aux hérétiques.⁶⁰ En ce qui concerne les Juifs, un règlement détaillé ne survient qu'en 418: ces derniers doivent être chassés de l'armée (*militia armata*), leur recrutement comme *agentes in rebus* ou *palatini* est désormais illégal, mais leur droit à pratiquer l'*advocatio* ou à faire carrière dans leur cités (*curialium munerum honor*) est reconnu.⁶¹

Il est donc douteux que le critère d'orthodoxie remonte à la constitution adressée par Honorius au préfet Caecilianus en 409; c'est suite à une interpolation qu'il figure dans le texte actuel de CJ 1.55.8.⁶² Le silence de la Nouvelle 3 de Majorien à cet égard n'a donc rien d'étonnant et, à en juger par les Nouvelles peu

⁵⁴ Pour une formule presque identique, voir CJ 1.4.15 = 2.6.8 (468): *Nemo ... accedat ad iogatorum consortium, nisi sacrosanctis catholicae religionis fuerit imbutus mysteriis*.

⁵⁵ CTh 16.8.19; Linder 1987, n° 39.

⁵⁶ Honoré 1998, 236-237.

⁵⁷ CTh 16.5.25; CTh 16.5.29.

⁵⁸ En théorie, les mesures de chaque empereur sont en vigueur dans l'ensemble de l'empire, mais en réalité elles n'ont pas force de loi dans les territoires administrés par ses collègues: voir les remarques de Jones 1964 I, 472-473; A. Cameron, JRS 55, 1965, 243; Barnes 2002, 190-192.

⁵⁹ CTh 16.8.16; Linder 1987, n° 33; trad. É. Magnou-Nortier et al., Le Code Théodosien, Livre XVI, Sources Canoniques 2, Paris 2002, p. 341.

⁶⁰ CTh 16.5.42 (408). Voir aussi le commentaire de Linder 1987, n° 45.

⁶¹ CTh 16.8.24; Linder 1987, n° 45.

⁶² Une interpolation du genre postulé ici se fait remarquer dans le cas de la précision *non nisi Christiani* (CJ 1.4.5), absente dans le texte de CTh 14.27.1 (396).

nombreuses de ses successeurs, aucun empereur de l'empire romain d'Occident n'a modifié la loi sur ce point. En Orient, par contre, Théodose II interdit la *defensio civitatis* aux Juifs et aux Samaritains en 438,⁶³ restriction élargie en 505 par Anastase à tous ceux qui ne sont pas *sacrosanctis orthodoxae religionis imbuti mysteriis*. Ce n'est que grâce à leur inclusion dans le Code Justinien que ces mesures ont acquis force de loi dans l'Italie byzantine.⁶⁴

Dans une lettre de 418, Sévère, évêque de Minorque, nous fournit des renseignements précieux sur les Juifs de Mahon et relate leur conversion au christianisme. Ce document exceptionnel nous fait ainsi connaître, entre autres, deux notables de cette communauté. Théodore, qui est le patron de ses concitoyens (*patronus municipum*), a déjà rempli les charges curiales (*cunctis curiae muniis exsolutis*) et servi de *defensor civitatis* (*defensor iam extiterat*).⁶⁵ Caecilianus est lui aussi un notable éminent, au point qu'il vient d'être élu *defensor civitatis* (*ut etiam nunc defensor civitatis electus sit*).⁶⁶ Selon son dernier éditeur, ce texte témoignerait d'une transgression de CJ 1.55.8, promulguée une dizaine d'années avant les événements rapportés par Sévère de Minorque.⁶⁷ FRAKES, quant à lui, impute à l'évêque Sévère l'ignorance de la législation récente, tout comme il le fait, on l'a vu, pour Augustin.⁶⁸ Une fois réfutée l'opinion commune selon laquelle Honorius avait déjà écarté les non-orthodoxes de la *defensio civitatis*, ces interprétations ne s'imposent plus.

Loin de nous faire connaître une procédure de nomination prescrite par Honorius en 409, le texte actuellement conservé de CJ 1.55.8 doit beaucoup aux rédacteurs du Code Justinien. Comme il est bien connu, ces derniers ont apporté des modifications de forme et de fond au texte des constitutions reprises du Code Théodosien, et il suffit de jeter un coup d'œil à l'édition de MOMMSEN pour s'en rendre compte. Dans le cas de la constitution concernant la *defensio civitatis*, l'omission de CJ 1.55.8 de la tradition manuscrite du Code Théodosien a toutefois masqué une intervention particulièrement substantielle.⁶⁹ Mais si, dans le cas qui nous intéresse ici, les collaborateurs de Tribonien se sont inspirés de la constitution relativement récente d'Anastase, ont-ils tout de même laissé intactes

⁶³ Nov. Theod. 3.2 = CJ 1.9.18, pr. Cf. Laniado 2002, 219–220.

⁶⁴ Cf. Sanctio pragmatica pro petitione Vigillii, c. 11 (éd. Schoell/Kroll, Novellae, p. 800): *Iura insuper vel leges codicibus nostris insertas, quas iam sub edictali programme in Italiam dudum misimus, obtinere sancimus*. Cf. Archi 1981, 2004–2010. Pour la législation de Justinien relative à l'Italie, voir aussi Bonini 1987, 30 et n. 51. 99–110.

⁶⁵ Sévère de Minorque, Epistula de Iudaeis VI 3 (éd. Bradbury 1996, 84 = PL 20, 733); cf. PLRE II Theodorus 13; Laniado 2002, 215.

⁶⁶ Sévère de Minorque, Epistula de Iudaeis XIX 6 (éd. Bradbury 1996, 108 = PL 20, 741); PLRE II Caecilianus 2.

⁶⁷ Bradbury 1996, 33–34. Ce savant fait remarquer: "We have here a good example of local populations quietly ignoring the distant thunder of imperial edicts and arranging their affairs in accordance with the reality of local power structures". Voir aussi Braun 1998, 149. 164.

⁶⁸ Frakes 2001, 186–192.

⁶⁹ Une intervention plus radicale encore se rencontre dans le cas de l'irénarchie, comme il ressort de la comparaison entre CTh 12.14.1 (409) et CJ 10.77.1. Voir les remarques de Declareuil 1911, 361–362; Laniado 2002, 100.

les dispositions de ce dernier? Ayant sous les yeux une version intégrale de la loi adressée au préfet Eustathios en 505, ils ont dû en supprimer les éléments inutiles (titulature détaillée de l'empereur et du destinataire, préambule, sanction etc.) et retoucher le style de l'extrait destiné à figurer dans le Code Justinien.⁷⁰ Quant au contenu, N. VAN DER WAL est d'avis que les modifications effectuées par les rédacteurs sur les constitutions relativement récentes des prédécesseurs immédiats de Justinien sont moindres, mais par là même plus difficiles à déceler.⁷¹ Rappelons que dans de nombreux cas la promulgation d'une loi particulière répond à une situation concrète rapportée à l'empereur par ses dignitaires ou ses sujets, et que les constitutions sont le plus souvent reproduites dans le Code sans le rappel de leur contexte originel; c'est l'intervention des rédacteurs qui leur a fait revêtir l'allure de mesures à portée générale.⁷² Il n'est pas exclu que la constitution d'Anastase sur la *defensio civitatis* ait subi un traitement analogue. Quant aux détails de la procédure de désignation, le témoignage de deux documents de langue grecque semble en garantir l'authenticité sur au moins certains points.

Une constitution conservée par une inscription fragmentaire de Korykos (Cilicie Première), de date incertaine (500/10?), fait suite à une requête adressée à Anastase par l'évêque, le clergé et les "notables (*logades*) pris parmi tous les propriétaires (*ktêtores*) et habitants (*oikêtores*)". C'est à ces catégories de la population citadine qu'Anastase confie l'élection du *defensor civitatis* (*ekdikos*) ainsi que du *curator civitatis* (*ephoros*), tout en prévenant les fonctionnaires du gouverneur de la province contre toute tentative d'intervention.⁷³ Dans ce corps électoral composite, tout comme dans celui de la constitution adressée au préfet Eustathios en 505, on retrouve les représentants de la hiérarchie ecclésiastique aux côtes de laïques. Il y a pourtant des divergences, en particulier en ce qui concerne la curie; reléguée à la fin de la liste dans la constitution de 505, elle ne compte pas au nombre des signataires de la requête adressée à Anastase par la cité de Korykos, ce qui peut expliquer qu'elle ne fasse pas partie du corps électoral. Cependant, on aurait tort d'en conclure que cette cité n'avait plus de *curiales*, étant donné que ces derniers sont attestés par quelques témoignages épigraphiques de datation difficile.⁷⁴

Tandis que la constitution de 505 insiste sur l'orthodoxie des candidats, la mesure relative à Korykos ignore cet aspect. Ce silence est peut-être dû au mauvais état de conservation du document épigraphique, mais ce n'est pas la seule explication possible. En effet, le corps électoral est tenu non seulement de

⁷⁰ Le traitement des Novelles postérieures au Code Théodosien par les rédacteurs du Code Justinien a été étudié par Van der Wal 1980, 1-27.

⁷¹ Van der Wal 1980, 23.

⁷² Cf. Volterra 1971, 1056-1057.

⁷³ MAMA III 197; Hagel/Tomaschitz 1998, 198-199; trad. Chastagnol 1976, n° 128, p. 330-331.

⁷⁴ Laniado 2002, 182-183; Liebeschuetz 2001, 55-56, 107-108. Ce savant fait remarquer (p. 56): "So this little town had a council, but its role was subordinate. It was no longer the voice of the city".

désigner des candidats, mais aussi de vérifier leur capacité. Il n'y aurait rien d'étonnant à ce que, dans le cas présent, l'orthodoxie ait fait partie de la procédure de vérification (*dokimasia*), dans la mesure où le rôle de l'évêque y est prépondérant.

L'autre document est un édit de la préfecture du prétoire d'Orient dont il existe deux résumés, l'un dans un recueil de 33 édits, l'autre dans l'*index* (table des matières) d'un recueil perdu de 39 édits:

Recueil du *Bodleianus Roe* 18:

Περὶ ἀγορανόμων. Ἰλλου. Ὡστε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀγορανόμοις καθ' ὁμοιότητα ἐκδίκων ψηφισμα γίνεσθαι παρὰ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου καὶ τῶν τοῦ κλήρου καὶ κτητόρων καὶ πολιτευομένων καὶ λογάδων.⁷⁵

Index du recueil (perdu) du *Marcianus graecus* 179:

Περὶ τῆς τῶν ἀγορανόμων προβολῆς, καὶ ὅτι καθ' ὁμοιότητα τῶν ἐκδίκων καὶ οἱ ἀγορανόμοι χειροτόνοῦνται, ψηφισμάτων ἐπὶ τῇ τούτων προβολῇ γινομένων παρὰ τοῦ θεοφιλοῦς ἐπισκόπου τῆς πόλεως καὶ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτὸν εὐλαβεσιμάτων κληρικῶν καὶ κτητόρων καὶ πολιτευομένων καὶ λογάδων, καὶ πρόσγε καταθέσεως ἀνωμότου μὲν παρὰ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, μεθ' ὅρκου δὲ παρὰ τῶν λοιπῶν.⁷⁶

Les édits de ces recueils sont en partie anonymes et pour la plupart non datés, mais il n'y en a aucun dont on puisse affirmer qu'il soit antérieur au règne d'Anastase.⁷⁷ Deux d'entre eux sont attribués à Illous, un dignitaire inconnu par ailleurs. Son nom typiquement isaurien m'a suggéré autrefois une datation antérieure à la guerre menée par Anastase contre les Isauriens (492–498),⁷⁸ mais cet argument n'est pas décisif, et me semble maintenant ne plus devoir être maintenu. Le contenu des deux résumés impose au contraire de remonter la date à la fin de 506 au plus tôt: ils imposent en effet, pour les *curatores civitatum* (*agoranomoi*), une procédure de désignation semblable (καθ' ὁμοιότητα) à celle des *defensores civitatum*. De plus, le corps électoral est presque identique à celui que l'on retrouve dans CJ 1.4.19 (= 1.55.11). Dans les deux cas, les catégories énumérées sont en effet au nombre de cinq, avec l'évêque et le clergé en tête. Viennent ensuite, dans un ordre non constant, trois catégories laïques. Dans le cas des *possessores/ktêtotes*, l'équivalence est indubitable. En revanche, le sens exact du terme *politeuomenos* est encore débattu, certains papyrologues contestant son identification avec *bouleutès*, c'est-à-dire *curialis*, sans pour autant proposer de meilleure interprétation.⁷⁹ En ce qui concerne *honoratus*, la traduction grecque en est habituellement *axiômatikos*, mais on peut considérer les *logades*, qui figurent aussi dans l'inscription trouvée à Korykos, comme un autre équivalent.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ *Edicta Praefectorum Praetorio* (éd. Zachariae [supra n. 45] n° 8, p. 269).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* n° 4, p. 258–259.

⁷⁷ Feissel 1994, 280 n. 56.

⁷⁸ Laniado 2002, 38 n. 105. Pour le nom, voir Burgess 1990, 118.

⁷⁹ Dernières discussions de ce problème terminologique: Laniado 1997, 130–144; Worp 1999, 124–132; Thomas 2001, 1253–1254; Laniado 2002, 63 et n. 6.

⁸⁰ Cf. Laniado 2002, 177–178. Zachariae traduit *logades* par *honorati* (supra n. 75).

Si le corps électoral d'Ilous semble calqué sur celui stipulé par la constitution d'Anastase, les deux mesures diffèrent cependant sur certains points. L'empereur ordonne que les candidats prêtent serment auprès de l'évêque sur leur orthodoxie, tandis que le préfet exige une attestation écrite (*katathesis*) du corps électoral (avec serment, sauf pour l'évêque).⁸¹ En dépit de ces divergences, il n'y a pas de raison de douter que l'édit d'Ilous se base sciemment sur la constitution d'Anastase. Il lui est donc postérieur (19 avril, 505) ainsi qu'à la préfecture de son destinataire, Eustathios, dont la dernière attestation en fonction date du 20 novembre 506.⁸² Un édit préfectoral conservé intégralement ainsi qu'une lettre de Procope de Gaza suggèrent que, tout comme les empereurs, les préfets du prétoire réagissent aux plaintes de leurs subordonnés ou aux requêtes de leurs administrés.⁸³ On peut donc se demander si la constitution d'Anastase sur la *defensio civitatis* n'a pas amené les autorités d'une ou plusieurs cités du ressort de la préfecture d'Orient à porter devant le préfet Ilous la question de sa validité pour la *cura civitatis*.⁸⁴ Dans ce cas, Ilous aurait été élevé à la dignité de préfet du prétoire d'Orient peu après Eustathios, dont il a peut-être été le successeur immédiat. Cette hypothèse n'est en tout cas pas contredite par les fastes de la préfecture du prétoire, qui sont lacuneux sous Anastase.⁸⁵ Si cette hypothèse est correcte, l'édit d'Ilous, tout comme la constitution découverte à Korykos, serait antérieur au Code Justinien et en tout cas indépendant des interventions de ses rédacteurs. En tout état de cause, l'édit d'Ilous est sûrement antérieur à 535, date de la Nouvelle 15 de Justinien, qui confie la désignation du *defensor civitatis* à un corps électoral différent.⁸⁶

Conclusion

Tout porte à croire que, dans son état actuel, le texte de CJ 1.55.8 (409) a subi une intervention substantielle de la part des rédacteurs du Code Justinien. S'inspirant d'une constitution promulguée par Anastase en 505 (CJ 1.4.19 = 1.55.11), ces derniers ont mis à jour un texte du Code Théodosien, désormais perdu, tout en maintenant les précisions qui n'étaient pas encore tombées en désuétude dans les premières années du règne de Justinien. En conséquence, rien ne permet d'attribuer à Honorius ni l'inclusion de l'évêque et du clergé dans le corps électoral, ni l'exclusion des non-orthodoxes de l'exercice de la *defensio civitatis*.

⁸¹ En 535, Justinien exigera un serment à la fois du *defensor* et des *possessores (klētores)* qui l'ont désigné: Nov. 15.1 (éd. Schoell/Kroll, *Novellae*, p. 111).

⁸² PLRE II Eustathius 11.

⁸³ Feissel 1994, 271, 1.4-7 (= SEG XLIV 909), avec le commentaire, 285-287; Procopii Gazaei *Epistolae et Declamationes* (éd. A. Garzya/R.-J. Loenertz, *Studia Patristica et Byzantina* 9, Ettal 1963, Lettre 84, p. 44).

⁸⁴ Noter que, dans le cas de Korykos, une seule loi traite des deux fonctions.

⁸⁵ Cf. PLRE II p. 1249, 1251. Pour la prosopographie des préfets du prétoire sous cet empereur, voir en dernier lieu Laniado 2003.

⁸⁶ Just. Nov. 15.1, pr. (éd. Schoell/Kroll, *Novellae*, p. 111; épilogue, p. 114).

Dans son ouvrage *Decline and Fall of the Roman City*, J.H.W.G. LIEBESCHUETZ propose de distinguer deux étapes dans l'histoire de la cité de l'Antiquité tardive: une *Late City* au IV^e siècle, puis une *Later Late City* aux V^e et VI^e siècles. La date de 409 placerait CJ 1.55.8 à la transition d'une étape à l'autre, mais son contenu est le résultat d'une évolution qui ne s'achève que vers la fin du V^e siècle, et que l'on peut considérer comme l'une des caractéristiques les plus importantes de la deuxième étape: la christianisation de la cité. En 409, l'adhésion au christianisme de la plupart des citoyens est déjà un fait accompli, mais la christianisation des institutions municipales a à peine commencé. Ce n'est que sous Anastase I^{er}, le plus éminent des prédécesseurs de Justinien, que l'évêque, autrefois une personne privée,⁸⁷ devient une personne publique au plein sens du terme.

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⁸⁷ Cf. Gaudemet 1958, 351.

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***Servi Publici* in Late Antiquity**

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Servi publici have received only patchy attention in previous scholarship. The recently published dissertation of Alexander Weiss has, however, gone most of the way toward redeeming public slaves from the neglect to which they had formerly been relegated.¹ Indeed Weiss's work is a model of thorough and judicious scholarship and will surely remain the standard on the subject for decades to come. He has demonstrated how slaves were an integral part of the administrative apparatus in the cities of ancient Italy, Spain, Gaul, Greece and Asia Minor. There they helped conduct religious offices, managed archives, kept accounts, guarded prisons, controlled water supplies, and performed any number of other tasks. Despite his exhaustive treatment of the evidence for the late republic and high empire, Weiss left late antique evidence mostly unexamined. This led to the somewhat distorted impression that the *servus publicus* had essentially died out by the early fourth century.² In what follows I will outline the survival of public slaves throughout the fourth century and even up to the sixth century AD. This I will do in five sections: the first focuses upon the ongoing acquisition of *servi publici* by late antique cities; the second catalogues the various tasks assigned to *servi publici* in late antiquity; the third offers a rough comparison of the relative numbers of *servi publici* in the high and late empires; the fourth describes a shift in the meaning of the term *servus publicus*; and the fifth examines the reasons for the decline of this institution after the late fourth century. In the end I hope to show that this decline, while reflexive of a larger decline of the city in most regions of the empire beginning in the fifth century, has as much to do with changes in the system of dependent labor as with changes in the quality of urban life.

¹ Weiss 2004, 9–16 offers a complete survey of previous scholarship on the question. The most important studies include Mommsen 1887/88, 320–332; Halkin 1897; Liebenam 1900, 66f. 177–80, 277–279; Rouland 1977; Eder 1980; Gimenez-Candela 1981; Herrmann-Otto 1994, 196–205. I should like to thank Alexander Weiss for initiating contact about this question and for kindly sending proofs of his book before its publication. I should also like to thank Peter Hunt for carefully reading a draft of this article. Work on this piece was begun while I held an Alexander von Humboldt fellowship in Munich under the guidance of Prof. J.-U. Krause to whom I am also grateful for his support.

² Weiss 2004 *passim*, esp. 13 and 186f. where he argues that the last datable evidence for *servi publici* falls in AD 315 in the west and AD 304 in the east – clearly incorrect in light of what follows. Weiss 2004, 190 n. 29 further contends: “Die spätantiken Rechtstexte beziehen sich auf stadtrömische *servi publici*” – also demonstrably not the case. See further Rouland 1977, 274f.; Eder 1980, 3f. 168–171 for similarly bleak pronouncements about the fate of *servi publici* after the third century.

The Ongoing Acquisition of *Servi Publici* in the Late Antique City

The maintenance of *familiae publicae* in the cities of late antiquity required an ongoing supply of new slaves. Perhaps the single biggest source for these would have been natural reproduction.³ Because of their relatively privileged status, *servi publici* all across the empire and especially in Rome tended to establish quasi-marital relations with freeborn women. Normally the offspring of such unions would have been freeborn, but to guarantee an ongoing supply of *servi publici*, municipalities were allowed to apply the *Senatus Consultum Claudianum* – allowing the enslavement of freeborn women cohabiting with a slave – even without the customary three warnings to the woman in question.⁴ Even so, natural reproduction was probably never a sufficient source of new slaves, whether in provincial municipalities or in Rome. We would thus expect to find evidence of the ongoing acquisition of *servi publici* through other means. In his monograph *Servitus publica*, Walter EDER identified four such modes of acquisition attested for public slaves in the republic and early empire: capture in warfare, purchase, donation (inheritance and gifts), and penalties (*condemnatio* or *publicatio*).⁵ Apart from the first, which essentially ceased as a mode of acquisition for *servi publici* at the end of the republic, all of these are attested in late antiquity.

In a law of 409, Theodosius II described the disposition of a group of captured Scyrae and Huns who were to be farmed out as *coloni* to landholders but were expressly forbidden from being appropriated by cities as slaves. Though this piece of evidence is negative, it implies that in 409 cities were still interested in acquiring new *servi publici* from recently subdued captives.⁶ We also have evidence of bequests of *servi publici* in wills. A constitution of emperor Leo issued in 469 proclaims: “whether by right of inheritance, legacy, trust or gift, houses, civic *annonae*, any building or slaves may accrue to the property of Rome or any other city”.⁷ As late as 394, we also have testimony that Rome was still receiving *servi publici* as gifts. In a letter dated to that year, Symmachus asked his friend Flavianus, who was then on the Rhine frontier:

Desiring thanks from the city in connection with the expenditures for my son's quaestorian games, I wish to add another sort of beneficence by offer-

³ On the natural reproduction of *servi publici*, see Herrmann-Otto 1994, 196–205, dealing mostly with Rome, and Weiss 2004, 24–27, which covers the provinces and identifies eleven known *vernae publici*. See also Rouland 1977, 264–267.

⁴ *Sententiae Pauli* 2.21a.14: *Mulier ingenua, quae se sciens servo municipum iunxerit, etiam citra denuntiationem ancilla efficitur*. See below the law of Constantine, n. 72.

⁵ Eder 1980, 6–33. Weiss 2004, 17–28 updates Eder on the question of acquisition.

⁶ CTh 5.6.3 (a. 409): *Opera autem eorum terrarum domini libera [utantur] ac nullus sub acta peraequatione vel censui [---]acent nullique liceat velut donatos eos a iure census [in se]rvitutem trahere urbanisve obsequiis addicere*. Eder 1980, 15, following Mommsen 1887/88 II, 446–448, had argued that cities did not strictly purchase slaves through *emptio venditio*, but this has been disproved by *Lex Imitana*, rubric 79 (González 1986, 173), cf. Weiss 2004, 19f.

⁷ CJ 6.24.12 (a. 469): *Hereditatis vel legati seu fideicommissi aut donationis titulo domus aut annonae civiles aut quaelibet aedificia vel mancipia ad ius inclitae urbis vel alterius cuiuslibet civitatis pervenire possunt*. See also CJ 11.32.3, discussed below at n. 99.

*ing the curule stables of the eternal city five slaves each. And because the availability of slaves is easy at the border and the prices are usually decent, I beg you heartily to have reliable men purchase twenty slaves who are suitable for the above mentioned activity.*⁸

Finally, we also have testimony that cities continued to acquire slaves through penal appropriation, at least via *publicatio*.⁹ In 319 Constantine forbade decurions from establishing sexual unions with slaves and ordered that those who transgressed his ruling should be condemned and their slaves appropriated by the city of their origin.¹⁰ *Publicatio* also seems to be at issue in two letters of Gregory of Nazianzus which aimed to prevent the appropriation of the slaves of Nicoboulos, Gregory's cousin, by his town council for an offense they had committed.¹¹ There can be no doubt then that, at least up to the beginning of the fifth century, cities were interested in and capable of acquiring public slaves.

The Use of *servi publici* in the Classical and Late Antique City

Now that we have established an ongoing supply and demand for public slaves through the fourth century, we might ask what role *servi publici* played in their urban environment? In investigating this question, I will refer back to the situation in the high empire in an effort to determine whether cities used their slaves for the same or for different purposes in the early and later empire. In order to establish more firmly the sort of tasks assigned to slaves in the high empire, I will refer regularly to the monograph of WEISS which bases its examination of slave occupations upon a databank of some 305 inscriptions from provincial *servi publici*. Of these just 56 record a specific profession for the dedicant. The fact that the vast majority give no profession may simply reflect the tastes of the dedicant, but it may also indicate that a *servus publicus* often had more than one task, particularly in smaller cities.¹² One late antique funerary inscription of Lepcis – not certainly of a *servus publicus* – gives an amusing if melancholic indication of just such multi-tasking:

⁸ Symm., Ep. 2.78 (a. 394): *Itaque avidus civicae gratiae quaestoriis filii mei sumptibus studeo aliud genus largitatis adicere, ut curulibus stabulis urbis aeternae etiam quina mancipia largiamur. Et quoniam servorum per limitem facilis inventio et pretium solet esse tolerabile, quam maxime te deprecor, ut per homines strenuos viginti iuvenes praedicto negotio congruentes iubeas comparari.*

⁹ The question of *condemnatio* is more complicated, cf. Eder 1980, 26–32.

¹⁰ CTh 12.1.6 = CJ 5.5.3 (a. 319): *Si enim decurio clam actoribus atque procuratoribus nescientibus alienae fuerit servae coniunctus, et mulierem in metallum trudi per sententiam iudicis iubemus et ipsum decurionem in insulam deportari, bonis eius mobilibus et urbanis mancipiis confiscandis, praediis vero et rusticis mancipiis civitati, cuius curialis fuerat, mancipandis, si patria potestate fuerit liberatus nullosque habeat liberos vel parentes vel etiam propinquos, qui secundum legum ordinem ad eius successionem vocantur.*

¹¹ Greg. Naz., Epp. 146/47 (a. 383), esp. 146.6 and 147.5f.

¹² See Lex Irnitana, rubric 78 (González 1986, 173); cf. AE 1999, 908 on the annual assignment of tasks to *servi publici* by curial magistrates.

*Philip, who as librarius, notarius, ratiocinator and numerarius, was completely worn down by all this, lived 27 years without being sullied.*¹³

Even so, enough evidence exists for specialization, that we can generally assume that *servi publici* – especially those with clerical training – often had some particular assignment.

One of the most common tasks for a *servus publicus* – certainly in the city of Rome, but also in the provinces – was to attend upon a cult or priesthood. The data is, of course, skewed by the survival of the fulsome records of the *fratres arvales*, but even excluding these numbers, public cults were a major employer of *servi publici*.¹⁴ This remained true fairly late into the fourth century, at least in Rome. There we have a letter of Symmachus dated to 380, which was carried to Celsinus Titianus by a public slave named Rufus, a *pontificalis arcarius*. Rufus was apparently charged with delivering a report by the college of pontiffs and was then entrusted to explain in greater detail the business it described.¹⁵ Such courier service, also attested epigraphically for the pontifical slaves of the high empire,¹⁶ implied a considerable degree of responsibility even at this fairly late date. It is not surprising, however, that beyond 380, we have no further attestation of public slaves in the service of traditional cult in either Rome or the provinces. Given the fate of pagan cult in the later fourth and early fifth century, it is quite understandable that public slaves ceased to be assigned to this subspecialty of urban administration.

A less culturally fraught function for public slaves in late antiquity and one much closer to the functioning of cities was attendance on public magistrates. In the high empire this is well attested for *aediles* and *quaestores*, for example in the municipal charters of Irni and Urso or in the memorable incident from Apuleius'

¹³ IRT 657 (Lepcis): [Ph]il(i)ppus libra[r]ius notarius [rat]iocinator n(u)m[er]arius omni[bus] his consum[p]tus vixit an[n]os XXVII sine ulla m[ac]ula [---] pater fi[l]io pi[us]simo fecit. Lepelley 1981, 354 holds that Philippus may be a *servus publicus*. See also Liberalis, *servus publicus* of Sipontum, *servus arkar(ius) qui et ante egit rationem alimentariam* (CIL IX 699 = ILS 6479); and Carpus, *servus publicus* of the *fratres arvales*, who was *promotus ad tabulas quaestorias transscribendas* (CIL VI 2086 l. 64 = ILS 5030).

¹⁴ There are 39 attested *servi publici* attached to public cults in Rome: five to *pontifices* (CIL VI 68; 2120; 2307–2309; cf. ILS 3513; 4980f.; 8320 and CIL VI 32506); six to *XVviri SF* (CIL VI 2310–2314; 4847; cf. ILS 4983; CIL XIV 4002); four to *augures* (CIL VI 2315–2317; 37177; cf. ILS 3837); six to *VIIviri epulorum* (CIL VI 2318–2322; cf. ILS 4984); one to the *fetiales* (CIL VI 2318; cf. ILS 4984); five to the imperial cult (CIL VI 2323f.; 2329f.; 2341); four to the *curiones* (CIL VI 2325–2328; cf. ILS 4989–4990); two *sacerdotes* (CIL VI 2331f.); two further *sodales* (CIL VI 3882 = 32507; 37177); and three altar wardens (CIL VI 9403; 10020; AE 1976, 14). On *servi publici* who served the *fratres arvales* see Halkin 1897, 60–68; Eder 1980, 49–53. For more on *servi publici* who served as priestly attendants see Halkin 1897, 48–70, 160–166; Eder 1980, 41–56; Weiss 2004, 135–158.

¹⁵ Symm., Ep. 1.68: *Rufus pontificalis arcarius prosequitur apud te mandata collegii, cui prae ceteris retinendi Vaganensis saltus cura legata est ... Habes summam petitionum. Singula autem tibi vel commonitorii series indicabit vel Rufus expediet, cui maturum praestabis effectum ut sequestratum paulisper officium regressus adripiat.*

¹⁶ CIL VI 2120 (AD 155): *ita, ne qua mora videatur ei per nos fieri, libellum subscriptum per eu(n)dem publicum sine mora mihi remittas.*

Metamorphoses where the aedile of Hypata orders his slave *officialis* to insult a fish-monger by trampling his overpriced wares in the marketplace.¹⁷ To be sure, the city of Rome witnessed the disappearance of public slaves as attendants on magistrates and in other administrative posts in favor of imperial slaves and freedmen beginning in the first century AD.¹⁸ But *servi publici* continued to attend on magistrates in provincial cities into the fourth century. An undated constitution from the reign of Diocletian attests that such attendants were at the beck and call of local decurions in the late third century: Diocletian and Maximian instruct decurions to employ their *officialis publicus* to inform fellow citizens when they have been nominated for *munera*.¹⁹ Similar attendants on magistrates are attested in several texts related to the Donatist controversy in North Africa. Optatus of Milev records how, during the trial to acquit Felix of Abthungi of being a *traditor*, a book was produced which named those present at his original trial. These included the *curator rei publicae* and his entourage, the *magistratus*, the *scriba* and the *officialis publicus* Solon. That Solon was actually a slave is confirmed by a letter of Constantine – written in 315 but preserved in Augustine – which identifies the same individual (here named Solus) as a *servus publicus*.²⁰ The *Gesta apud Zenophilum*, one of the appendices to Optatus, preserve the acts of the *flamen perpetuus curator rei publicae* of Cirta, Munatius Felix, who, in 303, proceeded from Christian house to Christian house confiscating holy books. As an aid he brought the public slave Bos, whom he ordered to enter each property and rummage for evidence, a task public slaves had carried out in the context of searches for stolen property since the early republic.²¹ So too, when the proconsul Anullinus put the virgins Maxima and Donatilla on trial in Thuburbo, he commanded that they be brought before his tribunal by an *officialis publi-*

¹⁷ Irni: Lex Irnitana, rubrics 19 and 20 (González 1986, 153). See Weiss 2001 on the use of *servi publici* by the *duumviri* at Irni. Urso: CIL II 5439 = 11²/5, 1022 = ILS 6087 = FIRA I² 21 ch. 62. Hypata: Apul., *Met.* 1.24f. More on slave attendants of public magistrates at Mommsen 1887/88 II, 325–327; Halkin 1897, 71–77, 166–169; Eder 1980, 59–76; Weiss 2004, 29–36, 84–89.

¹⁸ See below n. 75.

¹⁹ CJ 10.32.2: *eamque (nominationem) statim in notitiam eius qui fuerit nominatus per officialem publicum perferre curent.*

²⁰ Optat. Mil., 1.27 (CSEL 26, 29): *Habetur volumen actorum, in quo continentur praesentium nomina, qui fuerant in causa Claudii Saturiani curatoris et Caeciliani magistratus et Superii stationarii et scribae Ingentii et Solonis officialis publici ipsius temporis.* Cf. Lepelley 1981, 269; Maier 1987, 173, 190. Edwards 1997, 26 translates *officialis* “the public official”, a misrepresentation of his status, made clear at Augustin., Ep. 88.4 (CSEL 34, 410): *atque Solum (!) servum publicum supra scriptae civitatis*; cf. Augustin., *Con. Cresc.* 3.70.81 (CSEL 52, 485–487) for the same letter.

²¹ Optat. Mil., app. 1.5 (CSEL 26, 188): *Felix flamen perpetuus curator rei publicae Bovi servo publico dixit: intra et quaere, ne plus habeat. Servus publicus dixit: quaesivi et non inveni.* Cf. Lepelley 1981, 392; Maier 1987, 222. Lepelley 1979, 227 n. 158 argues that another aid named Galatius was a public slave of Abthungi based on his reading of a corrupt passage at *Acta purgationis Felicis episcopi Autumnitani* from Optat. Mil., app. 2.4 (CSEL 26, 198–200). Maier 1987, 174, 179 offers a different reading. On the use of public slaves to search for stolen property, see Eder 1980, 77–79; Weiss 2004, 105f.

cus.²² Though the term *officialis* can also refer to a free man, its use here with the qualifier *publicus* implies a publicly owned slave, just as it did in the case of Solon.

From the early fifth-century *Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae* we know that similar public slave attendants – termed *vernaculi* – served each of the fourteen regional *curatores* in Constantinople.²³ Whether public slaves continued to serve as attendants on civic magistrates beyond this date is unclear. To be sure, we have attestations of *apparitores* to magistrates across the empire, but from the context it seems that these were usually free. Indeed, free *apparitores* are well attested even in the high empire, but the percentage of free to slave seems to have increased in the later empire. Similarly, the term *officialis*, well attested of slaves in the early fourth century, shifts its meaning almost entirely by the century's end when it designates subordinates in the imperial *officia*, be they operatives of the praetorian prefect, his governors, the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, or even *agentes in rebus*.²⁴ Certainly by the mid-sixth century, the *vernaculi* of Constantinople were a thing of the past, for John Lydus felt compelled to define the word in his *De magistratibus* in a way which implies it was no longer a part of the daily lexicon.²⁵ To judge from the evidence, then, it would seem that the decline in the power of curial magistrates in the fourth and early fifth century was paralleled by a decline in the use of slave attendants dedicated to these magistrates.

In the realm of public record keeping we are much better informed both from the epigraphy and from texts. Each city had a core of highly trained and extremely active public record keepers (*tabularii* in the west, *logographeis* in the east) whose jobs included archiving decrees, cataloging public properties, maintaining lists of citizens and officeholders, transcribing judicial proceedings, and – in the late empire – recording tax payments.²⁶ In all periods such record keepers could be drawn from the ranks of free citizens and freed public slaves.²⁷ The fact,

²² *Passio SS Maximae, Secundae et Donatillae* 2 (Maier 1987, 97): *Anullinus proconsul officiali publico iussit eas exhibere*. Cf. Joh. Chrys., *Ad pop. Ant.* 7. 4 (PG 49.96).

²³ *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* (apud Seeck 1876) 2.23f.: *vernaculum unum, velut servum in omnibus et internuntium regionis*; cf. 3.20; 4.20; 5.20; 6.20; 7.20; 8.20; 9.20; 10.20; 11.20; 12.20; 13.20; 14.20; cf. 16.45 *vernaculos quattuordecim*. Regio XIII lists no *vernaculi*, indeed no administrative apparatus, but Seeck 1876, 241 note ad 1.26 demonstrates that this represents a lacuna in the manuscript. More at Dagron 1974, 233f.; cf. Jones 1964, 600f.

²⁴ *PPO*: CTh 8.4.7 = CJ 1.3.4 (a. 361); CJ 1.28.2 (a. 371); CJ 1.40.4 (a. 335). Governors: CTh 1.22.1 = CJ 1.48.1 (a. 316). *CSL*: CTh 8.7.14 = CJ 12.23.2 (a. 377); CTh 6.30.7 = CJ 12.23.7; 14 (a. 384). *Agentes in rebus*: CTh 6.28.3 = CJ 12.21.1 (a. 386). Generically of imperial officials: CTh 7.22.3 = CJ 12.47.1 (a. 331); CTh 12.1.108 = CJ 10.32.38 (a. 384); CTh 11.36.17 = CJ 7.65.3 (a. 370). Indeed *officialis* had already been used of imperial officials early in the third century: D 36.4.5.27 (Ulpian); 12.1.34 (Paul); CJ 10.11.3 (a. 241).

²⁵ *De mag.* 1.44: "The tribunes ... had public slaves (*demosious oiketas*) who were called *vernaculi* (*bernaklous*) – the word signifies homebred slaves". Cf. id. *Mens.* 4.30.

²⁶ More on *tabularii* and *logographeis* at Halkin 1897, 103–106. 178–183; Ausbüttel 1988, 143f.; Weiss 2004, 70–84.

²⁷ Freeborn *tabularii*: ILS 9042 (Rome); CIL XIII 1989 (Lugdunum); XIII 4313. Free *logographeis*: IG XII, 1, 701 (Rhodes). Freedman *tabularii*: CIL III 3851 (Emona); AE 1911, 205 (Interamna Lirenas); CIL XIV 440 (Ostia); CIL XI 2710a (Volsinii). See also CTh 8.1.9 = CJ

however, that this group accounts for six *servi publici* and three *liberti publici* in Weiss's catalog indicates that notarial record keeping had always been an extremely common task assigned to public slaves.²⁸ This situation certainly obtained in the fourth century but then changed dramatically in readily demonstrable fashion. In a rescript of 290 or 293, Maximian explains that a provincial *libertus publicus* who had carried on with his job as *tabularius* after manumission had in no way compromised his free status or his son's chances to become a decurion.²⁹ Regardless of the specifics of the ruling, the implication is that slave *tabularii* served into the 290s, indeed that *tabularii* were in some ways expected to be slaves. By 401, however, the situation was reversed. In that year, Honorius ordered:

*By a general law we sanction that when tabularii may be needed either for entire provinces or for separate municipalities, freemen shall be appointed and hereafter entrance to this office shall not lie open to any person who is subject to servitude.*³⁰

Indeed, further provisions in the law make it clear that the prohibition on slave *tabularii* actually predated 401, though perhaps not by much given that servile *tabularii* were clearly still an issue. A funerary inscription dated to 432 marks the grave of the *primiscrinarius tabulari* of Milan who had achieved the *clarissime*, a far cry from the servile *tabularii* of the high empire.³¹ Thus while public slaves had certainly acted as *tabularii* in at least some cities up to the end of the fourth century, by the fifth century this was strictly forbidden.³²

12.49.2 (a. 365) which orders that all accountants to governors, formerly termed *numerarii*, are thenceforth to be called *tabularii*. These were surely free.

²⁸ Weiss 2004, 72f., esp. n. 166 which lists five further *tabularii* who may have been public slaves or freedmen. See also AE 1968, 34, a servile *tabularius* of Rome not in Eder 1980.

²⁹ CJ 7.9.3 + 6.8.1: *Titulo non praecedente, quibus dominia servorum quaeri solent, municipium libertus servus non efficitur. Si itaque secundum legem Vetti Libici ... manumissus civitatem romanam consecutus es, post vero ut libertus tabularium administrando libertatem, quam fueras consecutus, non amisisti, nec actus tuus filio ex liberis ingenio suscepto, quominus decurio esse possit, obfuit.* See Corcoran 1996, 79, 117f. 340 on issues of date, issuance and location. It is unclear whether the *tabularii* to whom local *curatores* distributed the fifth edict against the Christians in late 308 were free or slave, cf. Euseb., MP 9.2 (Sch 55, 148). So too Constantine's mention of a *tabularius civitatis* at CJ 10.19.1 (a. 315) may refer to a free or slave administrator. More on the manumission of *servi publici* at Giménez-Candela 1981, esp. 45–48.

³⁰ CTh 8.2.5 = CJ 10.71.3 (a. 401; trans. Pharr). Cf. Ausbüttel 1988, 177f.

³¹ ILS 9044: *[Sev]erus v.c. prim(i)scrin(arius) tabulari [Me]diol(anensis?)*. See also P.Cair.Masp. 67353 (a. 569) which records oversight of an *apokeruxis* by *ton demasion [s]kriba kai [t]aboullarion [k]ai demekdikon tes te tes (sic) lampras [A]ntinoeon polleos*. The three titles appear to refer to one person and the last, probably equivalent to *defensor plebis*, clearly implies a freeborn notable.

³² CTh 11.8.3 (a. 409) certainly implies that *tabularii* are equated with freeborn members of other *officia publica*. That *tabularii* continued to be used in cities into the sixth century is clear from CJ 6.22.8 (a. 521); CJ 6.30.22.2b (a. 531), and P.Cair.Masp. 67353 (a. 569). Even so, Nov. Just. 15 praef. (a. 535) would indicate that public record keeping had dropped off markedly by mid-century, and Liebeschuetz 2001, 124–136 has shown how most clerical functions were taken over by freeborn notables.

So too with public finance, where the epigraphic testimonia from the high empire are also abundant. Numerous inscriptions attest to the use of public slaves as financial accountants in the high empire, in the west usually termed *arcarii* but also sometimes *dispensatores summarum* or *vilici summarum* and in the east *oikonomoi tes poleos*.³³ And one eastern inscription, marking the funeral monument of Gaius Tryphon freedman *oikonomos* of the city of Nicomedia, is datable to the third or fourth century on epigraphic grounds.³⁴ Though the name *arcarius* continues to be assigned to accountants in fourth and fifth-century laws from the codes, of the six uses of the term, five refer to freeborn accountants of the imperial or provincial administration.³⁵ Only one late fifth-century law seems to refer to a *servus publicus* who was assigned to manage the accounts for the public aqueducts of Rome, an arena where other public slaves are well attested into the sixth century, as we shall see.³⁶ It must be acknowledged that public finance, like public record keeping, was never the exclusive preserve of slaves. Freeborn and freedman *arcarii* are well attested earlier and freeborn *oikonomoi* were often men of high status.³⁷ If these became the rule in most areas of urban administration by the fifth century, this would hardly be surprising. Indeed, a similar change occurred in the case of imperial *notarii*, where we know that a marked and explicit shift from the use of slave to freeborn occurred in the course of the fourth century.³⁸ It is reasonable to argue that a similar transformation occurred simultaneously in civic finance and record keeping.

Public slaves also performed legal services for their city as *actores publici* – we have six attestations in the epigraphy.³⁹ Because cities lacked a legal personality, they presented certain difficulties at law, not least being the acquisition of property. These could be solved, however, by *actores*, who could, like any good slave, acquire property for their master through various modes of acquisition.⁴⁰ These *actores* were also important for certain legal processes, particularly those in which no obvious representative for a private legal party could be found. This was true, for example, of a captive citizens seeking *postliminium* whose fortune

³³ Weiss 2004, 37–44 catalogs 25 *arcarii*, 6 *dispensatores*, 3 *vilici* and 3 additional slaves assigned to *summae* from the provinces. Add to these one from Rome, CIL VI 2307 = ILS 4980. *Oikonomoi* were as likely to be freeborn as slave, but Weiss 2004, 51–54 catalogs 3 definite slave *oikonomoi* and 15 others who seem to have been slaves or freedmen. In several other cities the *oikonomos* was clearly free and often of high social status. See also Halkin 1897, 183–189.

³⁴ TAM IV 1, 276 = Syll.³ 1231, cf. Weiss 2004, 53.

³⁵ CTh 10.1.11 (a. 367); CTh 10.24.1 = CJ 10.6.1 (a. 373); CTh 12.6.14 = 10.1.11 (a. 367); CTh 12.6.32 = CJ 10.72.15 (a. 429); CJ 10.23.3 (a. 468).

³⁶ CJ 11.43.8 (a. 474/78). On the date see PLRE II Adamantius 2. For other *servi publici* assigned to relatively specialized accounts see CIL X 3938 = ILS 6317 (Capua: *arcarius Cretae*) and AE 1978, 217 (Brundisium: *arcarius thermarum*).

³⁷ See for example the freedman *arkarius* Veientius Ianuarius at CIL XI 3780 = ILS 6580.

³⁸ Teitler 1985, 31–53.

³⁹ Weiss 2004, 59. More on *actores publici* at Halkin 1897, 41–44, 153–160; Eder 1980, 79f.; Weiss 2004, 59–69.

⁴⁰ See for example D 41.2.1.22; 41.2.2; Plin., Ep. 7.18.2; Tac., Ann. 2.30.3; 3.67.3 with Eder 1980, 18f.; Weiss 2004, 60f.

was nevertheless being dissipated in the period while they were still indisposed. Diocletian issued a rescript in 287 ordering the appointment of an overseer for the man's estate who could make satisfaction under the stipulation of the *servus publicus*.⁴¹ The same conundrum arose in the case of *adrogatio* – the adoption of a person who was already *sui iuris*. When a person was adrogated, the *actor publicus* was used to appoint trustees (*fideiussores*) who could safeguard the adrogee's financial interests against his or her new *paterfamilias*. Up to Diocletian's reign the legal texts continue to presume the existence of servile *actores publici* for precisely this purpose: a rescript of 286 insists on the appointment of *fideiussores* only by the *servus publicus*.⁴² Yet by the sixth century, the situation had clearly changed: in his *Institutes* Justinian insisted that the adrogee's interests be protected by the *persona publica, hoc est tabularius*. Because we now know that, in this period, *tabularii* were no longer allowed to be slaves, we witness yet another function formerly assigned to *servi publici* which has been transferred to freeborn administrators – though the process cannot be dated so precisely.⁴³

Not all the jobs assigned to *servi publici* involved clerical skills. Some public slaves, for example, were kept as skilled artisans. Thus a law of Constantine issued in 319 orders:

*We decree that those slaves endowed with various skills (artibus praedita) who belong to a city must remain in those same cities in such a way that, if someone should incite said slave or believe he can be lured away, he must replace the one enticed away with another slave, and a sum of twelve solidi must be offered to the government of that city whose slave was abducted. Also freedman artisans (artificibus), if they are enticed away, are to be restored to the city in the same fashion.*⁴⁴

⁴¹ CJ 8.50.3 (a. 287): *Cum cognatos tuos nondum postliminio regressos adfirmes, sed adhuc in rebus esse humanis, et bona eorum fraudibus diversae partis dissipari, interpellatus rector provinciae providebit eum sub observatione constituere, qui stipulante servo publico satis idonee dederit*. In light of this text and that which follows, Weiss 2004, 68–69 must revise his thesis that free and slave *actores publici* were distinguished by the slave's singular involvement with property acquisition/management and by the free *actor*'s unique jurisdiction over legal affairs.

⁴² CJ 8.47.2 (a. 286): *super patrimonio eius idoneis fideiussoribus datis servo publico caveatur, ne sub copulandae adoptionis obtentu in facultates eius, quae ei diligenti provisione servandae sunt, intruas*. Cf. D 1.7.18. CJ 11.37.1 (a. 222–235) and CJ 11.37.2 (a. 284–305) both assume that the *actor publicus* must be a slave.

⁴³ Inst. 1.11.3: *Cum autem impubes per principale rescriptum adrogatur, causa cognita adrogatio permittitur et exquiratur causa adrogationis, an honesta sit expediatque pupillo, et cum quibusdam condicionibus adrogatio fit, id est ut caveat adrogator personae publicae, hoc est tabulario, si intra pubertatem pupillus decesserit, restitutum se bona illis qui, si adoptio facta non esset, ad successionem eius venturi essent*. A freeborn *actor publicus* is attested already in AD 250 at Sens, CIL XIII 2949 = ILS 7049; cf. CIL XIII 1684 = ILS 1441.

⁴⁴ CJ 6.1.5: *Mancipia diversis artibus praedita, quae ad rem publicam pertinent, in isdem civitatibus placet permanere, ita ut, si quis tale mancipium sollicitaverit vel avocandum crediderit, cum servo altero sollicitatum restituat, duodecim solidorum summa inferenda rei publi-*

Unfortunately, we can no longer establish precisely what skilled jobs these slave artisans performed. We might assume, however, that they were involved in the maintenance of public structures, a job attested for *servi publici* in earlier periods.⁴⁵ Regardless, the law confirms that public slave artisans existed at least through the early fourth century.

Public slaves were also used to help keep law and order, especially as prison wardens and executioners.⁴⁶ In this as in so many realms of public administration, the use of slave as opposed to free personnel was a matter of regional custom and often changed across time and place. In early second-century Bithynia, for example, Pliny requested that Trajan transfer troops to guard prisons which had traditionally been overseen by public slaves; Trajan chose instead to maintain the local custom.⁴⁷ Some of the richest sources about the execution of justice in antiquity are the martyr acts, many of which fall in the early fourth century. Unfortunately most offer no certain testimony as to whether wardens and executioners were slave or free. The early fourth-century *Martyrdom of Saints Agape, Irene and Chione*, however, leaves no doubt that the executioner of Thessalonica in 304 was a public slave named Zosimus.⁴⁸ Another early fourth-century martyr account, the *Passio SS Sergii et Bacchi*, though less reliable as a historical source, indicates that Barbalissos had several public executioners (*demioi*) ca. 310/13.⁴⁹ Though we cannot be certain that these were publicly owned slaves, their designation implies as much.⁵⁰ To be sure, much of the responsibility for guarding prisons and executing sentences shifted to imperial personnel in late antiquity (the *commentarienses* on a governor's staff or imperial soldiers),⁵¹ yet we have indications that cities continued to maintain public prisons and at least one text confirms that some staffed these with public slaves: the mid-fifth century *Life of Alexander Akoimetes* reports that its subject, who flourished in the early fifth

cae illius civitatis, cuius mancipium abduxit: libertis quoque artificibus, si sollicitati fuerint, cum eadem forma civitati reddendis. On the date and addressee of this constitution see Frakes 2001, 39–41; cf. Rouland 1977, 269.

⁴⁵ See Halkin 1897, 88–90, 173f.; Eder 1980, 90f. 168.

⁴⁶ See Halkin 1897, 97f. 176f.; Eder 1980, 83–89; Krause 1996, 255f. 263, 305–308; Weiss 2004, 102–116.

⁴⁷ Plin., Ep. 10.19f., cf. Sherwin-White 1966, 586f.

⁴⁸ *Martyrium Sanctarum Agapae, Irenae et Chionae* 5.8–6.2 (Musurillo 1972, 290); *Zosimou tou demosiou*; *Zosimou doulou demosiou*. Cf. the very similar role of the public executioner (*demosios*) in the mid third-century *Martyrium Pionii* 21.3 (Musurillo 1972, 162; Robert 1994, 31).

⁴⁹ *Pass. SS Sergii et Bacchi* 18; 26 (Anal. Boll. 14, 1895, 388, 392). On the date and reliability of this text see Fowden 1999, 11–26.

⁵⁰ Indeed, Greek authors through the early fifth century make circumstantial references to *demioi* which imply – without confirming – that this extremely stigmatized task remained open to public slaves, e.g. Joh. Chrys., *De Laz. Conc.* 4.1 (PG 48, 1007); Ep. ad episc. (PG 52, 541); Lib., *Decl.* 49.2. So too, *carnifices* are still attested in the late fourth-century west, but without any indication of their free or slave status, e.g. Amm. Marc. 28.1.55; Hier., Ep. 1 passim.

⁵¹ See for example Euseb., MP 7.2, 11; 21 (SCh 55, 141, 164); cf. Ausbüttel 1988, 190f; Krause 1996, 265–267.

century, was held in prison in Chalcis "guarded by the city's municipal slaves, since the magistrates feared him".⁵²

Perhaps the most durable job assigned to *servi publici* in antiquity actually came onto the scene fairly late, the maintenance of aqueducts. The existence of aqueduct slaves – generically termed *aquarii* – dates only to the year 11 BC when Augustus transferred to the ownership of the senate and people of Rome the *familia aquariorum* he had inherited from Agrippa. Up until the previous year Agrippa had maintained these as his own private slaves and managed the aqueducts as a personal benefaction. His original 240 *servi publici Romani* were later supplemented with 460 imperial slaves under Claudius.⁵³ From Rome this method of administration spread outward across Italy and to the provinces: epigraphic testimonia prove that similar slaves also served in the cities of Brundisium, Philippi, and probably Venusium.⁵⁴ Lead pipes, which easily preserve legible inscriptions in archaeological contexts, also record the names of many public slaves who operated as *plumbarii*, a further indication that provincial cities managed their public water systems with *servi publici*.⁵⁵ That public slaves continued to perform this function into late antiquity is confirmed by an inscription of Tivoli, datable on epigraphic and onomastic grounds to the fourth century. It applies to a single aqueduct – termed *forma* in the parlance of the day⁵⁶ – and lists as its overseers a college of 20 *circitores* – slaves whose job it was to patrol and prevent damage, above all by encroaching tree roots.⁵⁷ Similar slaves seem to have been in service in Rome down to at least the beginning of the sixth century when Cassiodorus reports Theodoric's chagrin at the misappropriation of public *aquarii* by private individuals.⁵⁸ Though Theodoric sent an officer to correct this and other abuses involving the misuse of public property, we have no further attestations of public slaves working on the Roman aqueducts in the years that follow. Indeed, after Vitigis cut the Roman aqueducts during his siege in 537, these were repaired only provisionally by Belisarius and were described as

⁵² Vita et Institutum Piissimi Patris Nostri Alexandri 41 (PO 7, 690): *en hypo ton demosion phylattomenos dia ton phobon ton archonton*. For locally maintained *ergastula* in late antiquity see CTh 15.1.9 (a. 362); cf. Krause 1996, 260–270.

⁵³ Frontin., Aq. 2.116; cf. 2.96–98. On public slave *aquarii* see Halkin 1897, 79–85; Weiss 2004, 117–122.

⁵⁴ Brundisium: AE 1964, 138 = AE 1966, 99. Philippi: AE 1923, 87 = AE 1974, 588. Venusium: CIL IX 460. Six public slaves of Rome are attested in connection with the aqueducts: CIL VI 2343–2346; 6489; 37176 (cf. CIL VI 8489; 8493; ILS 1974f.; 9050).

⁵⁵ On *plumbarii* see Weiss 2004, 122–125.

⁵⁶ See for example Symm., Ep. 9.131; Rel. 20.2; CTh 15.2.1 = CJ 11.43.1; Greg. Mag., Reg. Ep. 12.6 (CCSL 140A, 976f).

⁵⁷ CIL XIV 3649. The inscription, first published at Dessau 1882, lists 19 *circitores*, 3 *decani* and their 28 children, though Dessau contends that the original stone – now lost – may have listed more.

⁵⁸ Cass., Var. 3.31.4: *Mancipia vero formarum servitio principum provisione deputata in privatorum cognovimus transisse dominium*. The *comes formarum*, an office first mentioned in AD 381 (CIL VI 3865 = 31945; cf. CIL VI 1765; Not. dign. occ. 4.5), continued to exist down to Theodoric's day (Cass., Var. 7.6). From extant evidence, we cannot determine whether this official had *servi publici* at his disposal.

crumbling in a letter of Pope Gregory the Great dated 602.⁵⁹ Another letter from the *Variae* datable to ca. 520 makes it clear that there were no such slaves to manage the aqueduct of Ravenna at this point either.⁶⁰

That a similar body of public slaves existed in Constantinople down to at least the end of the fifth century is clear from a law of emperor Zeno, who took several measures to reform the use and maintenance of the city's aqueducts.⁶¹ The law forbids illegal tapping, even by high officials, and the planting of trees near an aqueduct on pain of confiscation. Of particular interest, however, is its discussion of aqueduct slaves, which it styles *munuscularii aqueductus*:

*praef.: We decree that nothing be attempted by any person endowed with whatsoever dignity against the munuscularii aquaeductus or the public sources that flow into the aqueducts ... 4. We decree that all the aquarii or guardians of the aqueducts, who are called hydrophylaces, who are charged with the oversight of all the aqueducts of this royal city, should be tattooed on their individual hands with the fortunate name of our piety so that by this mark they may be made obvious to all and may not be plucked away by the procurators of houses or by anyone else for diverse uses or retained in the name of public corvees or operae. 5. But if one of these aquarii should happen to die, we order that he who is substituted in place of the dead one be similarly marked so that those associated with the public service may adhere without cease to their duties over the aqueducts and may not be occupied with other functions.*⁶²

This implies ongoing maintenance of the *familia*. Even so, Zeno's mention of the temptation to appropriate *aquarii* illegally indicates that it will not have been easy to keep their numbers at full strength.

⁵⁹ Procop., *Bella* 5.19.8–18; Greg. Mag., *Reg. Ep.* 12.6 (CCSL 140A, 976f.). On Rome's aqueducts in late antiquity and their repair by the popes in the late eighth and early ninth centuries, see Coates-Stephens 1998; cf. Ward-Perkins 1984, 47f. 119–135 on the maintenance of aqueducts elsewhere in Italy through the Ostrogothic period.

⁶⁰ Cass., *Var.* 5.38 (a. 523/26) places the burden of clearing Ravenna's overgrown aqueduct on *possessores*.

⁶¹ See CJ 11.43.8 (a. 474/79) and CJ 11.43.9 (a. 479/91).

⁶² CJ 11.43.10 (a. 479/91); *praef.: Decernimus, ne quid a quacumque persona qualibet dignitate praedita contra munuscularios aquaeductus vel fontes publicos qui ad aquaeductus confluunt pertemptetur ... 4. Universos autem aquarios vel aquarum custodes, quos hydrophylacas nominant, qui omnium aquaeductuum huius regiae urbis custodiae deputati sunt, singulis manibus eorum felici nomine nostrae pietatis impresso signari decernimus, ut huiusmodi adnotatione manifesti sint omnibus nec a procuratoribus domorum vel quolibet alio ad usus alios avellantur vel angariarum vel operarum nomine teneantur. 5. Quod si quem ex isdem aquariis mori contigerit, eum nihilo minus qui in locum defuncti subrogatur signo eodem notari praecipimus, ut militiae quodammodo sociari excubiis aquae custodiendae incessanter inhaereant nec muneribus aliis occupentur.* The manuscript heading of the law designates "Spontius" as its addressee, but this should surely be read Sporacius, the addressee of another law of Zeno regarding aqueducts, cf. PLRE II Sporacius 1. Presumably he was PVC.

The Relative Numbers of *servi publici* in the Classical and Late Antique City

If *servi publici* remained part of the urban framework into the early fourth century but gradually lost their importance in the period following, the question naturally arises, what was their role in late antiquity relative to earlier periods? Here, of course, some statistical comparison would be welcome but is not to hand.⁶³ It is tempting to use comparisons of the relative numbers of datable inscriptions recording *servi publici* from various periods as an indicator of their relative numbers over time. In point of fact, the number of inscriptions recording *servi publici* between the first century BC and the third century AD dwarfs those from late antiquity. Indeed, we have no securely datable inscription later than AD 250 and the number roughly datable to the fourth century on epigraphic grounds is only two, with none from later centuries.⁶⁴ This dearth of late-antique inscriptions is, however, just as easily explained by the decline in the epigraphic habit as the decline in this institution.⁶⁵

Even so, we do have some numerical data with which to compare relative numbers of civic slaves in the early and later empire. The early fifth-century *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* offers what appears to be a complete list of civic institutions in that city which includes civic personnel. The entry for each region lists a *curator* (a sort of regional alderman), who is served by a *vernaculus* – a servant factotum and regional herald. In addition he relied on between 20 and 80 *collegiati*, depending on the region, who were to act as firefighters, and 5 *vicomagistri*, who worked as police. These latter two groups were probably drawn from free men since no mention is made of their slave status, while the *vernaculus* is clearly glossed as a slave.⁶⁶ The notice would thus indicate that Constantinople had only fourteen *servi publici* attending local officials in the early fifth century – this number must not have included other public slaves like the *aquarii* discussed above. Contrast this with an early first-century inscription

⁶³ Weiss 2004, 159–162 investigates the number of slaves per *familia publica* and estimates an average of ca. 40 per city.

⁶⁴ AE 1933, 113 (Worms; a. 250): *Gratinus rep(ublicae) civ(itatis) Vang(ionum) servus arcarius et Decorata eius libert(a) public(a)*. Cf. CIL XI 3780 = ILS 6580 (Veii; a. 249); CIG 3516 = IGR IV 1284 (Thyatira; a. 244/47); CIL XI 5737 (Sentinum; ca. a. 260). In his catalog of municipal *servi* and *liberti publici*, Weiss lists 49 securely datable inscriptions of which 13 date to the second century BC, 4 to the first, 20 to the first century AD, 10 to the second, and 2 to the third. Of inscriptions roughly datable on epigraphic grounds, most cluster in the first century BC through the second century AD (39) with only 3 from the second century BC, 5 from the third century AD and 1 from the fourth century, that being Syll.³ 1231. To this should be added I. Aquileia 552, not in Weiss's catalog, Suppl. 5, 1989, 253–255 no. 3 = ILS 9420 (a. 323) records the management of an endowment in Feltria from which annual *sportulae* were to be given to various groups including the *officio publico*. This seems to imply a *familia publica*, but this supposition cannot be confirmed. I owe this reference to Christian Witschel.

⁶⁵ For the latest on this question see Borg/Witschel 2001.

⁶⁶ *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* 2.21–29; 3.19–22; 4.19–22; 5.22–25; 6.28–31; 7.19–22; 8.24–27; 9.18–21; 10.17–20; 11.22–25; 12.20–24; 13.20–24; 14.20–24; 16.44–47. For more on *vernaculi* see above n. 23.

of Ostia, a city one tenth the size of fifth-century Constantinople,⁶⁷ which indicates that the *familia publica* there had 21 active *servi publici* and 35 *liberti*.⁶⁸ We might also compare the first-century inscription from Cibyra, a town even smaller than Ostia, honoring Q. Veranius Philagrus for having recovered 107 *demosioi* who had been illicitly acquired by a private landholder.⁶⁹ Some of the reason for this comparatively small number in Constantinople may be related to the notice in Eunapius informing us that the praetorian prefect Rufinus had sold off the public slaves of Constantinople at the end of the fourth century.⁷⁰ Though this assertion is highly rhetorical and thus not entirely credible, it probably had some basis in fact and appears to confirm the *Notitia*'s indication that early fifth-century Constantinople had witnessed the replacement of public slaves by free laborers as civic functionaries.

We also have one similar numerical figure from the late-antique west, though its import is even less clear cut. The fourth-century inscription listing the *circitores* of Tivoli has a total of at least 19 active *servi publici* dedicated to the single aqueduct in question. We know from Frontinus that, from the reign of Claudius, Rome had a total of 700 slaves – 240 *servi publici* and 460 *servi Caesaris* – working its aqueducts who were divided into six classes: *vilici*, *castellarii*, *circitores*, *silicarii*, *tectores* and *alii opifices*.⁷¹ That 20 might have been assigned as *circitores* to one of the fourteen aqueducts of Rome is certainly within the proper order of magnitude. Rome's aqueducts may not, then, have been suffering from any lack of *servi publici* when this inscription was carved. Here again this confirms earlier indications that the *aquarii* were among the few *servi publici* whose ranks were maintained deep into late antiquity.

Shifts in the Late-Antique Understanding of the Term *servus publicus*

A Constantinian constitution of 320 offers telling witness to a transformation in the concept "*servus publicus*" which was taking place already at the beginning of the fourth century. The law concerns the application of the *Senatus Consultum Claudianum* in the case of fiscal, i.e. imperially owned, slaves. Constantine relaxes the rule by allowing women who cohabit with fiscal slaves to retain their free status but consigns their offspring to the status of Junian Latin. He then goes on to define precisely what he means by fiscal slaves:

⁶⁷ Antonine Ostia had 50–60,000 inhabitants, Meiggs 1973, 532–534. Fifth-century Constantinople had ca. 600,000, Durliat 1990, 257–265.

⁶⁸ CIL XIV 255, cf. ILS 6153. Weiss 2004, 160 argues that these 21 may have represented only a portion of the total number of active *servi publici* in Ostia. More on the *servi publici* of Ostia at Meiggs 1973, 174, 182, 226.

⁶⁹ IK Cibyra 41 = IGR IV 914; cf. Nollé 1982, 267–273 contra Robert 1937, 375–378.

⁷⁰ Eunap., Hist. frag. 62.2 (Blockley): "Rufinus became so excessively greedy that he sold the public slaves (*andrapoda demosia*)".

⁷¹ Frontin., Aq. 2.116f.

*It is our will that this law shall be observed, and we restrict it to fiscal slaves, to those born on the estates of our patrimony, to the emphyteutic estates, and to those that belong to the property of our privy purse. For we do not derogate anything from the ancient rights of the municipalities, and it is our will that no slaves of any cities whatever shall be included in any participation in this law, so that the municipalities may hold their power unimpaired and not subject to the ancient interdict.*⁷²

Constantine thus left unimpaired the rights of cities to regulate the sexual relations of their *servi publici* with freeborn women. As noted earlier, *servi publici* often established quasi-marital relations with freeborn women, and the cities had come to rely on their offspring as a source of new slaves.⁷³ Constantine's law sought to protect this source, but its catalog of fiscal slaves set in contradistinction to municipal slaves indicates that there was a growing confusion about the difference between the two. Indeed, by 362 Julian was able to lump fiscal and municipal slaves together and order that the mates of neither be subject to the SC *Claudianum*.⁷⁴ Both laws make it clear that the concept of *servus publicus* was beginning to lose its integrity as the border between municipal and imperial slaves disappeared.

This confusion only grew over the course of the fourth and into the fifth century as the term *servus publicus* came increasingly to assume the meaning: "imperial slave". Indeed the designation was no longer even applied so much to chattel slaves – who had ceased to be held by the emperor in great numbers.⁷⁵ Instead, by the mid-fourth century, *servus publicus* generally referred to the bound personnel who assumed responsibility for various state services provided by the later Roman government. Thus we find the term applied to the armorers in imperial *fabricae*, to imperial weavers and dyers in the *gynaecea*, *linyphia* and *baphia*, and to the bakers and grinders of the imperially managed *pistrinae* in Rome.⁷⁶ Above all, however, the word came to designate slaves charged with the functioning of the imperial *cursus publicus*.⁷⁷ Indeed *publicus*

⁷² CTh 4.12.3 (a. 320; trans. Pharr). On this law and that which follows, see Evans Grubbs 1995, 266–268.

⁷³ See above n. 4.

⁷⁴ CTh 4.12.5 (a. 362): *Quod quidem circa privatas personas convenit observari; nam eas mulieres, quae fiscalibus vel civitatis servis sociantur, ad huius sanctionis auctoritatem minime pertinere sancimus.*

⁷⁵ See Chantraine 1967, 69–73.

⁷⁶ CJ 6.1.8 (a. 389: *publicorum servorum fabricis*); CTh 14.3.7 (a. 367: *pistrinorum ... servis*); Euseb., VC 2.20.3 (*demoisiois ergois douleuein*), taken with 2.34.1f. and Soz. 1.8.3f., clearly refers to *fabricae*, *gynaecea* and *linyphia*. On *pistrinae* see also CTh 9.40.3 (a. 319); CTh 9.40.5–7 (a. 364).

⁷⁷ CTh 8.5.17 (a. 364: *servus*); CTh 8.5.21 (a. 364: *familia*); CTh 8.5.48 (a. 386: *servi*); CTh 8.5.58 = CJ 12.50.17 (a. 398: *servus publicus*). See also Euseb., HE 10.5.23 which allows bishop Chrestus of Syracuse to demand from the *corrector Siciliae* use of a public wagon (*demoisio oxema*) and three slaves (*paides*) to use as attendants during his journey to the Council of Arles in 314. Surely the slaves belonged to the *cursus publicus*. On this confusion of *publicus* as municipal and *publicus* as imperial, see Halkin 1897, 175f.; Eder 1980, 165, 169f.; Weiss 2004, 190. Neither DiPaola 1999, 41–60 nor Kolb 2000, 197, 295–306 treat this problem with sufficient clarity.

and its Greek equivalent *demosios* came to be applied to all aspects of the public post system, from its horses, to its carts, to its posting stations, making it clear why the imperial servants who maintained it also bore the designation *servi publici*.⁷⁸ This blurring of the distinction between municipally and imperially controlled *servi* must stem at least in part from the commonly acknowledged process whereby the functions performed by public slaves – particularly those in the city of Rome – were gradually but steadily transferred to imperial slaves and freedmen.⁷⁹ By the fourth century, it seems, the boundaries between the two types of slaves had become thoroughly blurred. This is well illustrated in a passage where Sozomen interprets Constantius's 339 ban against Jews acquiring non-Jewish slaves: that law, preserved in the *Theodosian Code* orders that if any Jew should do so, his slave would be vindicated to the imperial fisc; Sozomen translates "if he should act against this, it becomes a public slave".⁸⁰ For the mid fifth-century author, then, imperial slaves were synonymous with *demosioi*.

This confusion may begin to explain some of the reason why authors become decreasingly familiar with the very concept of the *servus publicus* in later late antiquity. Still in the late fourth century, when, as we have seen, *servi publici* were relatively common, both Greek and Latin authors take for granted their existence. Thus Paianios, who in the 380s translated Eutropius *Epitome* of Roman history into Greek, interpreted the report that Diocletian may have been a *scribae filius* to mean that he was the son of a "public scribe" (*demosiou grammateos paida*).⁸¹ Another tradition, also reported in Eutropius's original, held that Diocletian was himself a freedman of a certain senator named Anullinus, so Paionius may simply have been cross applying the idea to the earlier supposition. Regardless, his translation indicates that it was simple enough in the late fourth century to assume that a common scribe might have been a *servus publicus*. Similarly the *Historia Augusta* offers a humorous aside about how Severus Alexander donated all of Elagabalus's "male and female dwarfs, fools, singing buggers, and all table entertainers and pantomimes to the people", i.e. as public slaves.⁸² Though the notice is unreliable and applies to a third-century emperor, its late fourth-century author was at least aware that it was possible to donate public slaves to the city. By the mid-fifth century this was much less the case. The antiquarians Servius and Macrobius had to explain the role of *servi publici* in the Roman cult of Hercules to an unfamiliar audience.⁸³ Writing in Antioch in the

⁷⁸ *Animalia publica, demosioi onoi, demosioi hippoi*: CTh 8.5.2; 8; 10; 53; 60; Amm. Marc. 21.26.21; Theod., HE 1.7.2; Joh. Lyd., Mag. 3.40; Procop., Bell. 2.20.20. *Demosion ochema*: Greg. Nys., Ep. 2.13; Procop., An. 30.2.4. *Demosios dromos*: Athan., Hist. Ar. 20.2; Jul., Epp. 34; 41; Theod., HE 2.16.17; Joh. Lyd., Mag. 2.10; 2.26; 3.4; Procop., Bell. 3.16.12.

⁷⁹ Chantraine 1967, 373f.; cf. Eder 1980, 57, 94, 163–165; Weiss 2004, 187f.

⁸⁰ CTh 16.9.2 = CJ 1.10.1: *mancipium fisco protinus vindicetur*; Soz., HE 3.17.4: *ei de para touto poiesei, demonon ton oiketen einai*.

⁸¹ Paian. ad Eutrop. 9.19. On Diocletian's possible servile origin cf. Epit. 39.1 and PLRE I Diocletianus 1.

⁸² HA, Sev. Alex. 34.2: *nanos et nanas et moriones et vocales exsoletos et omnia acroamata et pantomimos populo donavit*.

⁸³ Mac., Sat. 3.6.13; Serv., ad Aen. 8.179; 269f.

early sixth century, John Malalas needed to explain the meaning of *vernaculus* which he glosses merely as "attendant" (*peripolos*), betraying a shaky understanding. Even John Lydus, who wrote in sixth-century Constantinople – which, as we have seen, actually had designated *vernaculi* in the early fifth century – felt compelled to gloss the word twice for his audience.⁸⁴ By the seventh century, Isidore of Seville wrote of *servi publici* only in the imperfect tense as an antiquarian bit of trivia.⁸⁵

The Reasons for the Decline of the *servus publicus*

A clear picture has emerged from the data. The *servus publicus* as an institution is well attested at the beginning of the fourth century conducting most of the tasks he had conducted in earlier periods. He continues to appear with regular frequency throughout the century, though the range of his activities, particularly as an administrative assistant, begins to become increasingly restricted. By the mid-fifth century, most of the tasks formerly assigned to *servi publici* have been re-assigned to freeborn laborers (those of *tabularii* or *actores*) or are no longer attested whatsoever (building managers and attendants on priests or magistrates). The exception to this is the *aquarii* whose work continued until the early sixth century but then too gave out. This picture obviously fits well with what we know about changes in civic administration and the maintenance of infrastructure from other archaeological, literary and documentary sources.

The reasons for the decline in public servitude may, however, have as much to do with a decline in the use of slaves as with any measurable decline in cities, which did not begin in some regions until the seventh century. As noted above, essential administrative jobs were often not so much neglected as reassigned to freeborn personnel. This may be related to the sheer difficulty of maintaining *familiae publicae* in a more general sense. *Servi publici* were, quite frankly, a bothersome lot, in large part because they enjoyed many more privileges than other slaves – claims on public distributions of food and money, partial testamentary rights, and above all handsome wages and extensive control over their *peculium*.⁸⁶ Moreover, because they were often entrusted with sensitive and at times lucrative state assignments, they posed constant problems of negligence, fraudulence and speculation. Pliny, for one, had a very low opinion of the reliability of *servi publici*. In a previously mentioned letter to Trajan, he recommended transferring control of the local prisons of Bithynia from public slaves to soldiers because of the notorious unreliability of the former.⁸⁷ An inscription of Tuder

⁸⁴ Joh. Mal. 7.12 (Dindorf 186); Joh. Lyd., Mag. 1.44.

⁸⁵ Orig. 15.14.2; 19.33.4. See also Synes., Dion 12 for a similarly archaizing reference.

⁸⁶ On the elevated status of *servi publici* see Eder 1980, 102–125; Weiss 2004, 163–179, which have largely revised earlier work by Mommsen 1887/88, 323f. and Halkin 1897, 32–39, 112–36, 195–213.

⁸⁷ Plin., Ep. 10.19.1: *Vereor enim, ne et per publicos parum fideliter custodiantur.*

(Todi) indicates that a *servus publicus* there had stolen from the decurions who oversaw him and cursed them with a *defixio*.⁸⁸ Another of Ephesus from AD 44 reveals that *demosioi* there had been charging foundling children to the Artemision to raise at public expense, an underhanded way for them to acquire slaves on the cheap.⁸⁹ Yet another Ephesian inscription of AD 162/63 reveals that the public slave Saturninus had been illegally receiving and apparently profiting from debt payments.⁹⁰ A rescript of Alexander Severus indicates that an *actor publicus* had swindled money from debtors by issuing faulty receipts.⁹¹ A first-century inscription of Myra reports that a public record-keeper of Tlos had to be beaten for continuously turning in documents with erasures, a mark of fraudulent bookkeeping.⁹² And the vigilant Frontinus, while serving as *curator aquarum* in Rome, discovered and shut down a whole network of fraudulent punctures made by the public *aquarii* in the water lines to feed local industries, no doubt for a fee.⁹³ Public slaves were thus well positioned to take serious advantage of their relatively privileged position in order to fleece and defraud the citizens who owned them.

Servi publici were also difficult to maintain because cities had trouble keeping track of these very moveable pieces of property. This problem was timeless, as indicated in the previously mentioned first-century inscription of Cibyra recording the recovery of 107 *demosioi* illegally appropriated by a private estate holder.⁹⁴ In his *On the Aqueducts* Frontinus reveals that he too had to reassert control over Rome's *aquarii* who were often misappropriated for *privata opera*.⁹⁵ That this same problem persisted into late antiquity has already been seen in the letter of Theodoric lamenting the misappropriation of aqueduct slaves by private holders and in Zeno's constitution requiring the tattooing of *aquarii* in Constantinople.⁹⁶ We have also discussed Constantine's constitution of 319 forbidding landholders from illegally holding *servi publici* on pain of replacing the slave and paying a fine of twelve solidi.⁹⁷ Moreover, enrollment in the clergy offered a new avenue of escape to former *servi publici* previously unavailable in the high empire. Valentinian III attempted to foreclose this option with a novel of 425.⁹⁸

⁸⁸ CIL XI 4639 = ILS 3001; cf. AE 1985, 364. See also the *defixio* involving the public slave Rufa of Nomentum, AE 1901, 183 and the amatory *defixio* at AE 2000, 1611c.

⁸⁹ IK Ephesos 17-19 = IEphesos II 21; cf. Dignas 2002, 153.

⁹⁰ IK Ephesos 25 = IEphesos II 23; cf. OGI 508.

⁹¹ CJ 11.40.1.

⁹² AE 1976, 673 = SEG XXXIII 1177. See Wörle 1975, 280f. on this incident.

⁹³ Frontin., Aq. 2.115. Similar problems with the public and sacred slaves of Labraunda are described in the fragmentary second-century AD inscription at ILabraunda II 59. Dignas 2002, 211 suggests a possible slave uprising.

⁹⁴ See above n. 69.

⁹⁵ Frontin., Aq. 2.117.

⁹⁶ See above nn. 58 and 62.

⁹⁷ See above n. 44.

⁹⁸ Nov. Val. 35.3 (a. 425): *Nullus originarius inquilinus servus vel colonus ad clericale munus accedat neque monachis aut monasteriis adgregetur, ut vinculum debitae condicionis*

Precisely because cities were *incertae personae*, they could not easily follow the whereabouts and activities of their slaves. This made them especially vulnerable to misappropriation by private individuals. It was thus perhaps a wise choice for cities to relax their use of *servi publici* where other coercive labor arrangements were possible. This may begin to explain why Rufinus chose to sell off large numbers of Constantinopolitan public slaves at the end of the fourth century. Even the constitution of Leo which allowed cities to inherit public slaves survives in a longer recension which makes it clear that the intent was not to retain these slaves nor any other property granted to a city, but to sell them for cash and put the proceeds to work on renovation projects:

Whether in any way by right of inheritance, legacy, trust or gift, houses, civic annonae, any building whatsoever or slaves may have accrued or will accrue to the right of the renowned city or any other city, it is permitted to these cities to enter a contract concerning these according to that city's benefit, so that the sum collected from the price may be disposed for the advantage of renovation or restoration of public structures.⁹⁹

Slaves were an expensive and not particularly efficient source of labor. Provided cities could find other solutions, it was understandable that they tried to do so.

It is thus not entirely surprising that the cities and imperial government turned to free workers to keep civic books and accounts and even to conduct menial labor. The prestige associated with administrative bureaucracy had grown gradually since the first century AD making lower level management positions not only available but even attractive to free laborers. More importantly, from a city's perspective, by the third century these low-level free laborers would have been *condicionales* and thus subject to beating and execution. Beginning in late antiquity, physical liability thus no longer represented an advantage of slave over freeborn. By late antiquity both could be punished unto death for malfeasance. The free man, however, could be maimed or killed with no monetary loss to the city. In fact, this sort of thinking is obliquely attested in a Constantinian constitution which originally formed part of a larger law regulating tax collection in North Africa. It placed responsibility on the *tabularius civitatis* for recording payments received while stressing that he must be mindful of the threat to his own person if he is caught for fraud.¹⁰⁰ The threat of physical violence was clearly a

evadat, non corporatus urbis Romae vel cuiuslibet urbis alterius, non curialis, non exprimario, non aurarius, civis collegiatus sevir aut publicus servus.

⁹⁹ CJ 11.32.3 (a. 469): *Si qua hereditatis vel legati seu fideicommissi aut donationis titulo domus aut annonae civiles aut quaelibet aedificia vel mancipia ad ius inclitae urbis vel alterius cuiuslibet civitatis pervenerunt sive pervenerint, super his licebit civitatibus venditionis pro suo commodo inire contractum, ut summa pretii exinde collecta ad renovanda sive restauranda publica moenia dispensata proficiat. Cf. above n. 7.*

¹⁰⁰ CTh 11.1.2 (a. 313): *ut eas (cautiones) tabularii sive sexagenarii periculi sui memores suscipiant a conlatoribus.* See also CTh 11.7.1 (a. 313); CJ 10.23.1 (a. 383); AE 1984, 250, line 8 (a. 369) for the use of *tabularii civitatis* to record tax and tribute payments. None of these documents says anything about the free or slave status of the *tabularii* in question. On these

sine qua non of public management. Only after the second century, however, could it be exercised over free as well as slave with equal vigor.

Moreover, the later empire developed another tool of social manipulation which further rendered servile status superfluous to the exercise of control over urban laborers. Beginning in the third century the government began legally binding individuals to continue in the professions of their parents. By 341 this technique was applied to *tabularii*, *scribae*, and *logographeis*.¹⁰¹ Cities could thus guarantee a succession of record-keepers without the burdensome necessity of owning these individuals. In the west and to some degree in Constantinople, this applied to the variety of jobs associated with the maintenance of order, infrastructure and urban provisioning which became the responsibility of *collegiati*, semi-servile guildsmen. We have already seen that *collegiati* acted as police and firefighters in Constantinople.¹⁰² Similar guilds were established for millers (*pis-tores*) and grain shippers (*navicularii*) in Rome and Constantinople as well as street sweepers, sewer cleaners, craftsmen and many other jobs in provincial cities.¹⁰³ That, by the fourth century, membership in the *corpus pistorum* entailed quasi-servile status is clear from laws as early as 319 condemning minor criminals to service in the *pistrinae publicae*.¹⁰⁴ A law of Honorius from 400 orders the Praetorian prefect of Gaul to recall forcibly those civic *collegiati* charged with the maintenance of urban infrastructure who had escaped their *ministeria* for the countryside.¹⁰⁵ Though the membership in many guilds appears to have remained free, particularly in the east, both free and bound *corporati* provided the metropoleis and provincial cities with a steady supply of urban laborers who could replace *servi publici*.

Public slaves thus survived considerably later into Roman history than Weiss has argued. They continued to be acquired and employed in both eastern and western cities deep into the fifth century. In the fourth century their activities were still quite diverse, ranging from attendance on public priests and magistrates, to the maintenance of public records and accounts, to legal services as *actores*, and to the upkeep of public prisons and aqueducts. Nevertheless, by the

measures see Giardina/Grelle 1983, 262f. 295f.; Ausbüttel 1988, 143–147, 188f. See also CJ 9.27.5 (a. 390) on the liability of *tabularii* for fraudulent accounts and CIL VI 1711 (a. 488) on the beating of fraudulent *molendinarii*.

¹⁰¹ CTh 8.2.1 = 12.1.31 = CJ 10.71.1 (a. 341): *Nullus omnino ex tabulariis vel scribis vel logographis eorumque filiis in quocumque officio militet, sed ex omnibus officiis nec non et si intra nostrum palatium militent, necdum inpleto quinquennio reperti et retracti protinus curiis officiisque municipalibus reddantur*. Cf. CTh 8.2.3 (a. 380); CJ 10.71.4 (a. 440/41).

¹⁰² See above n. 66.

¹⁰³ Jones 1964, 698–705, 858–861.

¹⁰⁴ CTh 9.40.3 (a. 319); cf. CTh 14.3.7 (a. 364) which refers directly to the *servi* of the *pistrinae*. See Nov. Just. 80.5 *praef.* (a. 539) for similar condemnations in the east. A full list of laws condemning petty criminals to the *pistrinae* is cataloged at Sirks 1991, 414; cf. *ibid.* 305–354 on the *corpus pistorum*.

¹⁰⁵ CTh 12.19.1: *Destitutae ministeriis civitates splendorem, quo pridem nituerant, amiserunt; plurimi siquidem collegiati cultum urbium deserentes agrestem vitam secuti in secreta sese et devia contulerunt*.

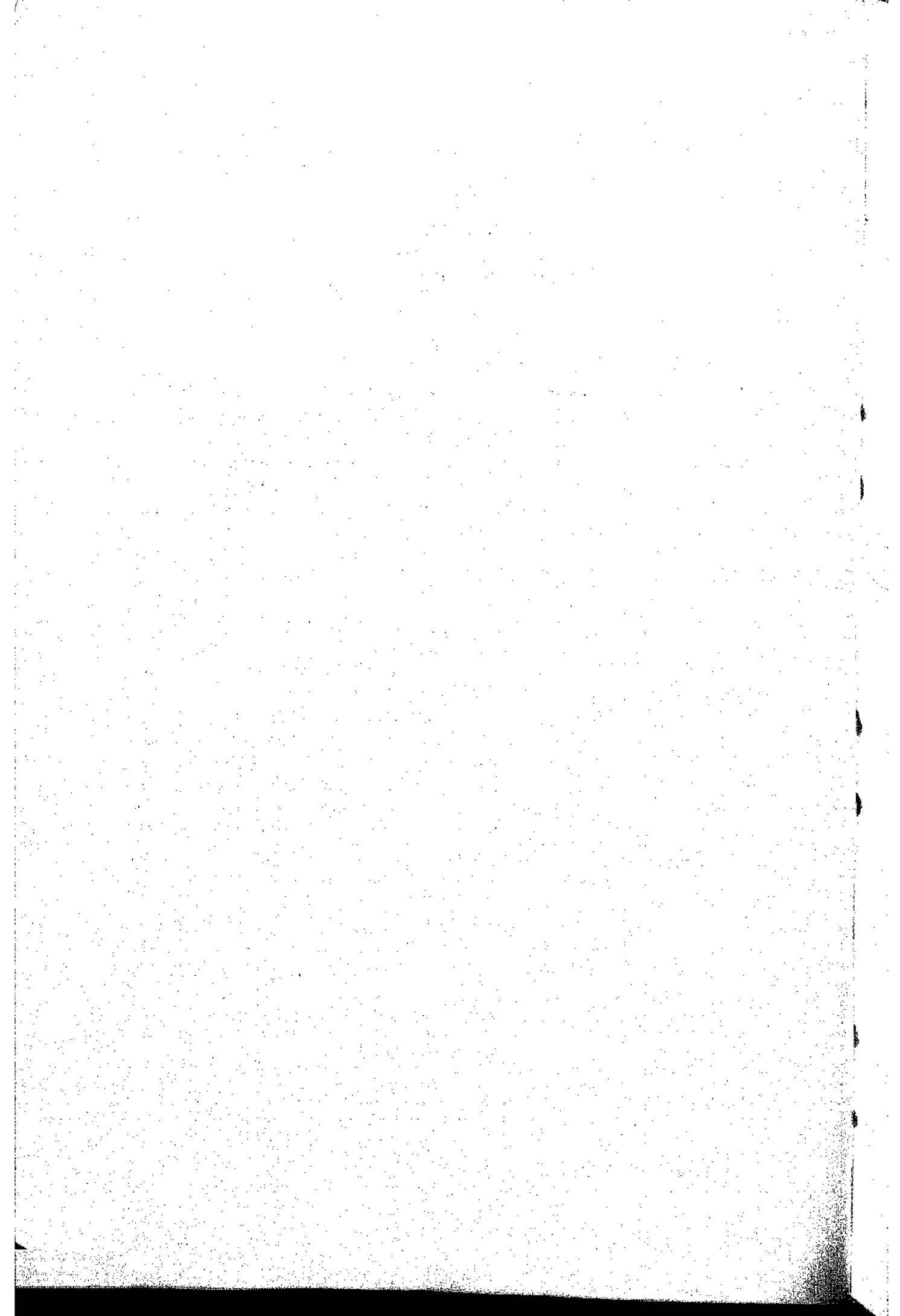
end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, attestations in many of these functions drop off and in some instances, most specifically *tabularii*, slaves were forbidden from continuing to perform duties formerly assigned to them. Though some tasks continued to be assigned to *servi publici* up to the sixth century, especially the maintenance of aqueducts, public slaves were becoming something of an antiquarian curiosity from the mid-fifth century onward. The reasons for this decline are complex and no doubt have connections to a more general decline in cities empire wide. Even so, such a decline has probably been exaggerated in previous scholarship. Thus a better explanation for the disappearance of *servi publici* should be offered. Public slaves had always been an expensive and often unreliable source of labor and they were extremely vulnerable to misappropriation. When the cities' power physically to coerce free laborers into performing civic functions increased in late antiquity and when cities acquired the means to bind laborers in the professions whose services they required, public slaves seem to have become superfluous and gradually to have disappeared.

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Der *epigraphic habit* in der Spätantike: Das Beispiel der Provinz *Venetia et Histria*

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Einleitung

Die antike Welt war bekanntermaßen eine Welt voller Inschriften. Das ist keineswegs selbstverständlich, denn es gehört wohl nicht zu den Grundeigenschaften des Menschen, an jedem Ort und zu allen Zeiten solche in dauerhafte Materialien gefaßte Denkmäler zu errichten, wie gerade ein Blick auf unsere heutige, in dieser Hinsicht vielfach verarmt erscheinende Umfeld verdeutlicht. Vielmehr handelt es sich um eine bewußte, von bestimmten kulturellen und mentalen Dispositionen beeinflusste Entscheidung, wann, wo und für wen man eine Inschrift schuf. Seit dem grundlegenden Aufsatz von Ramsay MACMULLEN hat man sich angewöhnt, den gesamten Komplex des Umgangs mit Inschriften in der Antike als *epigraphic habit* zu bezeichnen; alternativ – und vielleicht noch treffender – könnte man auch von ‚Inskriptenkultur‘ sprechen.¹

Nun war dieser *epigraphic habit* in der römischen Welt keine statische Größe (weder quantitativ noch qualitativ), sondern sowohl in chronologischer wie in geographischer Hinsicht erheblichen Variationen bzw. Veränderungen unterworfen. Eine Kurve der datierbaren Inskriptensetzungen zeigt zumindest für den Westen des Reiches aus einer globalen Sichtweise – die allerdings regional und nach Gattungen noch einmal erheblich zu differenzieren wäre – eine relativ geringe Dichte von Inskripten der republikanischen Epoche, eine massive Zunahme in der frühen Kaiserzeit, einen Höhepunkt im Laufe des 2. und frühen 3. Jhs. sowie eine stetige Abnahme ab dem mittleren 3. Jh.² Die Gründe für diese *Ups and Downs* sind noch nicht wirklich geklärt, aber gerade die Entwicklung des *epigraphic habit* in der Spätantike ist von großer Bedeutung für die Beurteilung des Städtelebens in dieser Epoche.

Das Einsetzen einer massenhaft verbreiteten Inskriptenkultur in weiten Teilen des Reiches während der frühen Kaiserzeit hatte offenbar verschiedene Gründe.³ Zu nennen wären der wirtschaftliche Aufschwung in vielen Regionen, eine tiefergreifende Romanisierung und die Imitation des stadtrömischen Vorbildes, vor allem aber das Bestreben der lokalen Eliten, sich vor der heimischen Öffent-

¹ MacMullen 1982; vgl. zu dem Phänomen ferner Meyer 1990; Woolf 1996 (bes. 30 zur „epigraphic culture“); Alföldy 1998.

² Mrozek 1973 mit der Tabelle auf S. 114; ders. 1998 (mit Graphik auf S. 11); Woolf 1996, 22; zu den Bauinschriften vgl. auch Jacques 1988 (Tabelle auf S. 243); Thomas/Witschel 1992, 175 Tab. B.

³ Vgl. Alföldy 1991; dens. 1995.

lichkeit zur Schau zu stellen und ihre Taten und Leistungen für die Gemeinschaft in ‚Denkmälern für die Ewigkeit‘ registriert zu sehen.⁴ Dies konnte in verschiedenen Kontexten geschehen, etwa am Grab. In erster Linie sind hier jedoch die sog. *civic inscriptions* anzuführen, die sich in der Regel auf das Zentrum einer Stadt mit seinen öffentlichen Gebäuden und dort insbesondere auf das Forum konzentrierten.⁵ Dazu zählten vor allem Tituli, die von Stiftungen der munizipalen Oberschicht kündeten, sowie die zumeist auf Statuenbasen angebrachten Ehreninschriften, die die Ämter des Geehrten aufzählten und ebenfalls dessen Leistungen auf dem Feld des *Euergetismus* hervorhoben. Hinzu kamen diejenigen Monumente, mit denen die gesamte Gemeinde herausragende Bürger, aber auch Staatsbeamte wie die Statthalter und vor allem die verschiedenen Kaiser ehrte. Das politische Leben der Gemeinden spielte sich sehr stark in der Öffentlichkeit ab, und die Ehreninschriften sowie die zugehörigen Statuen legten hiervon ein dauerhaftes und für jedermann sichtbares Zeugnis ab. Wir können somit in bezug auf diese Denkmäler von einem besonderes prägnanten Merkmal der ‚klassischen‘ Stadtkultur der Antike sprechen.

Ab dem mittleren 3. Jh. machte sich dann aber – wie bereits kurz angesprochen – innerhalb der Inschriftenkultur ein deutlicher Wandel bemerkbar; zunächst einmal rein quantitativ, denn es kam zu einem erheblichen Rückgang der Gesamtzahl der Inschriften. Ebenso deutlich sichtbar waren die qualitativen Veränderungen, die sich etwa in der zunehmenden Wiederverwendung von älteren Inschriftenträgern oder in einer Vernachlässigung des Schriftbildes und generell der äußeren Erscheinungsformen der Inschriften manifestierten. So klar dieser Wandel in vielen Regionen des römischen Reiches zu fassen ist, so umstritten bleibt die historische Interpretation der angesprochenen Entwicklungen, und dieser Frage gilt darum der vorliegende Beitrag.

Vorstellung des Materials

Als Testgebiet habe ich hierzu eine Region mit hoher Städtichte und besonders tief verankerter Stadtkultur gewählt, nämlich Italien. Da der gesamte Bestand an spätantiken Inschriften in Italien momentan noch nicht zu überblicken ist,⁶ erfolgte eine Konzentration auf ein bestimmtes Gebiet mit relativ guter Überlieferungslage sowohl in epigraphischer wie in archäologischer Hinsicht, nämlich auf

⁴ Vgl. Häusle 1980; Woolf 1996, 25–29. In unserer Region zeigt sich dies beispielhaft bei der Basis für eine Reiterstatue in Tergeste. In deren Inschrift (InscrIt X 4, 31 = ILS 6680 = Alföldy 1984, 84 Nr. 30) wird das Motiv für die Errichtung des Standbildes samt des zugehörigen Titulus folgendermaßen benannt: *uti ad posteros nostros tam vol[tus] amplissimi viri quam facta permaneant*.

⁵ Vgl. Witschel 1995.

⁶ Die systematische Sammlung des spätantiken Inschriftenmaterials aus Italien und weiteren Gebieten des Imperium Romanum in einer computergestützten Datenbank wird derzeit im Rahmen eines größeren Forschungsprojektes zur Stadt in der Spätantike an der LMU München durchgeführt. Für einige andere Regionen bzw. Inschriftengattungen gibt es bereits Überblicke; vgl. etwa Lepelley 1981 zu Africa oder Handley 2003 zu Gallien und Hispanien.

Venetia et Histria mit dem Vorort Aquileia. Vorangestellt sei eine kurze Präsentation des Materials (s. Anhang 1): Die unter Diokletian eingerichtete Provinz *Venetia et Histria* umfaßte zu Beginn des 4. Jhs. – bei einigen Zweifelsfällen – 26 eigenständige Stadtgemeinden.⁷ In fast allen von diesen haben sich spätantike Inschriften gefunden, was immerhin bereits auf ein Faktum verweist, das sich auch anderweitig bestätigen läßt: In dieser Region haben die meisten antiken Gemeinden zumindest bis zum Ende des 6. Jhs. in der einen oder anderen Form überlebt. Bei den wenigen Städten, die keine spätantiken Inschriften geliefert haben, läßt sich diese Tatsache entweder auf einen mittlerweile eingetretenen, rapiden Bedeutungsverlust des Ortes (wie in Ateste⁸ und Atria⁹) zurückführen¹⁰ oder aber durch den Überlieferungszufall erklären wie im Falle von Nesactium¹¹

⁷ Umstritten, wenn auch nicht unwahrscheinlich ist der Stadtstatus im Falle von Nesactium (vgl. Rosada 1999, 162f.) und Acelum (s. CIL V p. 198 sowie Fedalto 1999, 308 und PCBE II Agnellus 10 zur Bezeugung eines Bischofssitzes im 6. Jh.; es gibt aber von dort lediglich eine vermutlich spätantike Inschrift). Glemona war wohl spätestens seit dem 2. Jh. eine autonome Gemeinde, deren Territorium aus dem Südteil des Gebietes von Iulium Carnicum herausgeschnitten wurde (vgl. Gregori 1990). Daß Emona bereits seit der frühen Kaiserzeit zu *Venetia et Histria* gehörte, hat sich mittlerweile durch den Fund eines Steines, der die Grenze zwischen den Territorien von Emona und Aquileia markierte, endgültig bestätigt (Šašel Kos 2002). Bergomum wurde um 300 der neuen Provinz zugewiesen (Suppllt 16, 1998, 290). Nicht als eigene Gemeinden aufgeführt sind hingegen diejenigen Orte, die erst ab dem späteren 6. Jh. vor allem in Istrien und in den Lagunen Venetiens zu Bischofssitzen erhoben wurden; vgl. dazu die Übersichten bei Picard 1988, fig. 1; Fedalto 1999, 297–381.

⁸ Ateste scheint – aus unbekannten Gründen – schon sehr frühzeitig (Ende 2./frühes 3. Jh.) einen deutlichen Niedergang erfahren zu haben. Aus der Zeit danach liegen jedenfalls praktisch keine archäologischen oder epigraphischen Zeugnisse mehr vor (s. Suppllt 15, 1997, 30), und die Stadt wurde während der Spätantike auch nicht zum Bischofssitz erhoben. Die einzige spätantike Inschrift aus dem Territorium von Ateste, ein Meilenstein des Magnentius aus Baldaria (AE 1992, 741), könnte sehr wohl zur Wiederverwendung hierher verschleppt worden sein und somit ursprünglich auf dem Territorium von Vicetia (oder Verona) gestanden haben; vgl. Buonopane 1992.

⁹ Atria befand sich offenbar ebenfalls bereits seit dem 2. Jh. in relativ starkem Niedergang und stieg folgerichtig während der Spätantike nicht zum Bischofssitz auf. Unberücksichtigt bleiben hier die Inschriften aus dem Gebiet um Ferrara (das selbst keine römische Stadt war), da dieses vermutlich nicht zum Territorium von Atria, sondern zu dem von Ravenna und somit zur benachbarten Provinz gehörte; vgl. hierzu Suppllt 17, 1999, 125–134, bes. 126, 133.

¹⁰ Forum Iulii scheint hingegen vor der langobardischen Zeit keine größere Bedeutung besessen zu haben. (s. aber Cassiod. var. 12, 26, 2). Hier fehlte es an einer deutlich ausgeprägten frühchristlichen Tradition, und entsprechend spärlich sind die spätantik-frühchristlichen (d.h. vor dem 7. Jh. entstandenen) Stücke im Museum von Cividale vertreten, was wiederum zur geringen Zahl der spätantiken Inschriften (2) paßt. Ähnliches scheint auf die Nachbargemeinde Glemona zuzutreffen: Die vier spätantiken Inschriften sind nicht in Gemona selbst, sondern auf dem Territorium der Gemeinde gefunden worden; und zwar an Plätzen, die offenbar zu dem im 5./6. Jh. aufkommenden Siedlungstyp der *castra* gehörten (vgl. hierzu Bierbrauer 2000); bei zweien dieser Stücke ist zudem nicht sicher, ob sie nicht ursprünglich aus Iulia Concordia stammten (s. Anm. 125).

¹¹ In Nesactium wurde im 5./6. Jh. am nördlichen Rand des Forums eine Doppelkirchenanlage mit Baptisterium errichtet (Rosada 1999, 91–99), die auf das Vorhandensein einer größeren Christengemeinde hindeutet, obwohl der Ort nicht als Bischofssitz bezeugt ist (s. Fedalto 1999, 340).

und Tarvisium,¹² die beide durch Reste von Kirchenbauten bzw. die Bezeugung eines Bischofssitzes als nicht ganz unwichtige spätantike Zentren ausgewiesen sind.

Auch die Gesamtzahl der spätantiken Inschriften ist zumindest auf den ersten Blick durchaus beachtlich.¹³ Es handelt sich um ca. 1180 Tituli¹⁴ – zwar deutlich weniger als die Zahl der kaiserzeitlichen Inschriften aus dieser Region, aber immerhin genug, um behaupten zu können, daß die Inschriftenkultur in irgendeiner Form auch in der Spätantike fortgedauert hat. Bei näherem Hinsehen sind aber an dieser generellen Feststellung einige nicht unerhebliche Modifizierungen vorzunehmen. Das betrifft zunächst einmal die Verteilung der spätantiken Inschriften auf die einzelnen Orte.¹⁵ Über die Hälfte von ihnen stammt aus dem Gebiet einer einzigen Gemeinde, nämlich aus Aquileia. Das verwundert allerdings wenig, wenn man bedenkt, daß Aquileia – die weitaus bedeutendste römische Stadt der Region – schon in der Kaiserzeit einer der inschriftenreichsten Orte Italiens war. Hier hat sich also augenscheinlich auch in der Spätantike der lokale *epigraphic habit* zumindest in einigen Sektoren besonders gut gehalten. An zweiter Stelle folgt Iulia Concordia mit fast 130 Tituli.¹⁶ Gerade an diesem

¹² In Tarvisium, für das ab der Mitte des 6. Jhs. Bischöfe sicher belegt sind (s. PCBE II Felix 54), gibt es auch einige frühchristliche (?) Gebäudereste (Bertacchi 1980, 332f.), die darauf hinweisen könnten, daß hier schon zuvor eine nicht unbedeutende Christengemeinde existierte (so Fedalto 1999, 359, dessen Folgerungen mir aber zu weit zu gehen scheinen).

¹³ Gesammelt wurden alle Inschriftengattungen außerhalb des *instrumentum domesticum* im engeren Sinne. Nicht berücksichtigt wurden ferner Graffiti (s. aber Inscr. X 2, 95–182 zu dem interessanten Material aus der Eufraasius-Basilica von Parentium). Die chronologische Untergrenze der Sammlung bildet das Jahr 284 (bei sicher datierten Inschriften) bzw. das spätere 3. Jh. (bei nur einigermaßen genau datierbaren Stücken; zu den damit verbundenen methodischen Problemen s. Anm. 29). Als Obergrenze wurde die Wende vom 6. zum 7. Jh. gewählt, da sich zu dieser Zeit in Italien einschneidende Veränderungen vollzogen, die m.E. das endgültige Erlöschen der antik geprägten Stadtkultur bewirkten (vgl. Witschel 2004). Nicht mehr aufgenommen wurden daher diejenigen Inschriften aus den Lagunenstädten Venetiens, die eindeutig dem 7. Jh. zuzuweisen sind wie im Falle von Iesolo (s. etwa AE 1972, 200 mit dem Kommentar von Sartori 1970; die Mosaikinschriften in der Kirche dürften hingegen noch in das 6. Jh. gehören: so Cuscito 1983; Caillet 1993, 113; anders Bertacchi 1980, 333f.; vgl. auch Mazzoleni 1994, 204 mit Anm. 58) oder von Torcello (s. nur die bekannte Bauinschrift AE 1973, 245 aus dem Jahre 639).

¹⁴ Darunter befinden sich 55 griechische Texte.

¹⁵ Die genaue Abgrenzung zwischen den einzelnen Stadtterritorien ist nicht immer leicht vorzunehmen. So bleibt in einigen Fällen auch unklar, welchem antiken Stadtgebiet ein bestimmter Ort zuzuweisen ist, etwa Equilium (Iesolo), das entweder zu Altinum oder zu Opitergium gehört haben könnte. Der letzteren Alternative wird hier gefolgt.

¹⁶ Hierbei ist aber auch zu beachten, wie viele anepigraphische Sarkophage es aus Concordia gibt. Das gilt sowohl für die *Necropoli di Levante* (s. ISTC p. 31f.: fast zwei Drittel der ca. 270 hier gefundenen Sarkophage weisen keine Inschrift auf) wie für den Grabbereich um die Basilica; s. Mazzoleni 1987, 80: Von 34 sicheren Bestattungen in diesem Gebiet sind nur drei mit Inschriften versehen (ISTC 98–100; hinzu kommen wohl die beiden Marmortafeln ISTC 101/02; vgl. die Diskussion ebd. p. 125–133. Ähnliches ist im übrigen auch in anderen frühchristlichen Friedhöfen wie dem um die Basilica an der via Madonna del Mare in Tergeste zu beobachten: Lottich 1978, 183). Im Umkreis der Basilica, wo sich eher die einheimische Bevölkerung von Concordia begraben ließ, wurde in den wenigen Inschriften der christliche Charakter

Beispiel wird jedoch deutlich, welche Rolle augenscheinlich Überlieferungszufälle für das Bild der Inschriftenverteilung, wie es sich uns heute präsentiert, gespielt haben: Die allermeisten der spätantiken Inschriften Concordias stammen aus einer einzigen Grabung, nämlich von der sog. *Necropoli di Levante* im Osten der Stadt.¹⁷ Dieser Friedhof wurde, da von einer späteren Schwemmschicht überdeckt, fast intakt angetroffen – ein seltener Fall, der uns ahnen läßt, mit welchen Verlustraten wir an anderen Orten zu rechnen haben.¹⁸ Concordia nimmt also einen eher exzeptionellen Platz ein, denn an Bedeutung stand der Ort auch in der Spätantike, in der er ein wichtiges Verwaltungs- und Militärzentrum im Umkreis von Aquileia wurde,¹⁹ mit Sicherheit hinter anderen Städten der Region wie Verona oder Brixia zurück. Am Beispiel von Patavium mit seinen lediglich zwölf spätantiken Tituli²⁰ kann man schließlich sehen, daß sich nicht immer eine enge

der Bestattungen und deren Nähe zu den dort verehrten Heiligen sehr deutlich herausgestellt (so ISTC 98: *se suamque sepulturam vivens (Christ)i s(ancto) tabernaculo ac sanctorum memoriae commendavit*; ebd. 99: *iacet ante limina domnorum Apostolorum in propria sepultura*; ebd. 100: *adiu[ro per deum] omnipoten[tem] per [corpo]ra sanctorum [qui in hac basilica habitant]*, wobei auch hier der Name des Verstorbenen nicht genannt ist), sofern man eben nicht überhaupt anonym blieb (vgl. Croce Da Villa/Di Filippo Balestrazzi 2001, 204). Hingegen entwickelte sich in der *Necropoli di Levante*, wo eine größere Anzahl von Ortsfremden (vor allem Soldaten aus dem germanisch-gallischen Raum sowie Zivilisten aus Syrien) ihr Grab fand, eine anders geartete, relativ einheitliche Form des epigraphic habit (u.a. zu erkennen an der regelmäßigen Nennung von Strafen für Grabschänder: Impallomeni 1984), die in stärkerem Maße ‚profan‘ geprägt war (so daß es häufig schwer fällt, den Glauben des Bestatteten zu ermitteln; vgl. hierzu Anm. 29) und auf die Stellung der Verstorbenen im Diesseits abzielte.

¹⁷ Zur *Necropoli di Levante* und den dort gefundenen, beschrifteten Sarkophagen vgl. Hoffmann 1963; dens. 1969, 61–116; ISTC p. 17–45; Croce Da Villa/Di Filippo Balestrazzi 2001, 245–249; Dresken-Weiland 2003, 66–71. Concordia ist in dieser Hinsicht besonders privilegiert etwa im Vergleich zu Aquileia, wo fast alle spätantiken Grabinschriften mehr oder minder kontextlos geborgen wurden (s. Anm. 102).

¹⁸ Wie schnell zudem Neufunde das Bild verändern können, zeigt der Fall von Tridentum: Hier hat sich die Zahl der spätantiken Inschriften durch die Grabungen unter S. Vigilio schlagartig von 14 auf 37 erhöht; vgl. Mazzoleni 2001.

¹⁹ Vgl. Cracco Ruggini 1987b; La Rocca 2001, 289–293.

²⁰ Dabei handelt es sich um zwei Basen für Kaiserstatuen (Anhang 2 Nr. 31/32), drei Meilensteine, einen spätantiken Gesetzestext (CIL V 2781) sowie um sechs christliche Inschriften (s. auch Forlati Tamaro 1981, 289–296). Patavium besaß schon recht früh eine bedeutende Christengemeinde, deren Anfänge allerdings wie üblich im dunkeln liegen (vgl. Fedalto 1999, 348–353, insbesondere zu der vermutlich legendären Gestalt des Hl. Prosdocimus; der erste sicher bezeugte Bischof ist hingegen Crispinus kurz vor der Mitte des 4. Jhs.; PCBE II Crispinus 1; vgl. Forlati Tamaro 1981, 287f.). Trotzdem lassen sich lediglich eine Mosaik-Stifterinschrift in einem Gebäude unbekannten Charakters (Caillet 1993, 101–103), zwei christliche Baulinschriften (s. Anhang 4 Nr. 66) sowie zwei retrospektive Inschriften des 6. Jhs., die sich auf die Lokalheiligen Prosdocimus und Daniel beziehen (s. Anm. 180), nachweisen. Hinzu kommt möglicherweise eine einzige christliche Grabinschrift (vgl. Nicoletti 1995, 7 mit Anm. 1) aus dem Territorium, deren ursprüngliche Provenienz aber nicht gesichert ist (s. Anm. 193). Auch archäologisch ist das spätantike Patavium bislang schlecht bekannt; vgl. den Überblick in Hiller/Zampieri 2002. Es kann aber noch im 6. Jh. nicht ganz unbedeutend gewesen sein (vgl. Forlati Tamaro 1981, 289). Interessant ist der Vergleich mit dem benachbarten, deutlich kleineren Vicetia, das vermutlich erst im Laufe des 6. Jhs. zum Bischofssitz erhoben wurde (Cracco Ruggini 1987a, 286–289, 302f.), wo aber immerhin 26 spätantike Tituli (aus der Stadt selbst sowie aus dem Territorium) vorhanden sind.

Korrelation zwischen der Zahl der erhaltenen Inschriften und der anderweitig erschließbaren Bedeutung eines Ortes in dieser Epoche ergibt.

Stoßen Überlegungen dieser Art also recht schnell auf das Problem der unterschiedlich gelagerten Überlieferungsbedingungen, so ist eine Aufschlüsselung nach einzelnen Inschriftengattungen für unsere Fragestellung wesentlich aufschlußreicher. Am auffälligsten ist dabei sicherlich der drastische Rückgang der Statuenbasen²¹ mit Ehreninschriften für Angehörige der lokalen Oberschichten, aber auch für Mitglieder der Reichsaristokratie oder Provinzstatthalter. Hier von gibt es in der gesamten Region nur noch (maximal) 5 Beispiele²² aus der Zeit nach dem mittleren 3. Jh.²³ Auch die die Aufstellung von Statuen für die Kaiser mit entsprechender Inschrift auf der Basis²⁴ endete offenbar noch vor der Mitte des 4. Jhs.²⁵ – und dies nach einer relativ dichten Reihe entsprechender Tituli aus dem späteren 3. und frühen 4. Jh.,²⁶ die fast alle von den jeweiligen Stadtgemeinden errichtet wurden und somit zeigen können, daß deren Institutionen auch während der sog. 'Reichskrise' des 3. Jhs. funktionstüchtig geblieben waren. Profane Bauinschriften der Spätantike sind ebenfalls nur in recht geringer Zahl erhalten geblieben.²⁷ Auf fast allen von ihnen erscheint der Kaiser oder der jeweilige Statthalter, während municipale Einrichtungen – soweit überhaupt erwähnt – nur eine nachgeordnete Rolle zu spielen scheinen. Auffällig ist an einigen Orten ferner die starke Zunahme des Phänomens der Wiederverwendung von Inschriftenträgern – teilweise, um auf ihnen neue Inschriften anzubringen; häufig

²¹ Insgesamt gibt es aus *Venetia et Histria* 33 in der Spätantike beschriftete Statuenbasen bzw. Teile von solchen: 7 für Götterbilder (wobei dies nicht in allen Fällen gesichert ist), 21 für Kaiserstandbilder (s. Anhang 2) und 4/5 für Ehrenstatuen von hohen Reichsbeamten oder verdienten Bürgern (s. Anm. 22). Bei 23 dieser Basen ist der Stifter bekannt: Der Kaiser selbst (1), Statthalter oder andere hohe Reichsbeamte (11), die Stadtgemeinde bzw. der *ordo* (8), Mitglieder der lokalen Oberschicht (3).

²² s. Anhang 5 Nr. 4 (Tergeste), 58 (Feltia), 69 und 72 (Verona). Einen gewissen Sonderfall bildet die Basis für eine Statue des *pater Vergili* vom Forum in Aquileia; s. dazu Anm. 72.

²³ Dies bildet einen starken Kontrast zur Situation in der hohen Kaiserzeit, als in den Städten von *Venetia et Histria* zahlreiche Statuen mit Ehreninschriften für verdiente Bürger und Angehörige der Reichsaristokratie errichtet worden waren. Vgl. hierzu das bei Alföldy 1984 gesammelte Material sowie Zaccaria 1995; dens. 1999.

²⁴ s. Anhang 2.

²⁵ Die Neufunde von Statuenbasen und Inschriftenplatten der konstantinischen Zeit in Aquileia (s. nur den jüngsten Fund einer Inschriftentafel für einen der Söhne Konstantins auf dem Forum der Stadt: Anhang 2 Nr. 19) haben diese chronologische Ansetzung noch einmal bestätigt. Die einzige Ausnahme hiervon bilden zwei etwas merkwürdig anmutende Tituli aus Vicetia (Anhang 2 Nr. 29/30). Beide Inschriften für die Kaiser Valens und Gratian sind auf (wiederverwendeten) Säulenteilen angebracht und wurden von der *civitas Vicetina* in Auftrag gegeben (vgl. Cracco Ruggini 1987a, 279). Ich bin mir nicht ganz sicher, ob diese Monumente tatsächlich Statuen trugen oder ob sie auch in ihrer äußeren Form den mittlerweile für die Kaiserverehrung immer wichtigeren Meilensteinen angeglichen worden waren (vgl. hierzu Witschel 2002, bes. 328 Anm. 16). Für letztere Annahme könnte sprechen, daß sich in Vicetia tatsächlich ein Meilenstein für Gratian gefunden hat, dessen Formular demjenigen der Inschrift CIL V 3114 sehr nahe verwandt ist (Basso 1987, 123 Nr. 54 mit Anm. 380).

²⁶ Vgl. hierzu auch Mrozek 1998, 12f. 15.

²⁷ s. Anhang 5.

aber auch für ganz pragmatische Zwecke, z.B. als Baumaterial in der spätantiken Stadtmauer von Aquileia.²⁸

Am schwersten zu beurteilen ist wegen mangelhafter Datierungskriterien an vielen Orten die Entwicklung der paganen Funerärepi-graphik.²⁹ Zumindest in Aquileia scheint sich aber anzudeuten, daß bis in das 4. Jh. eine nicht unerhebliche Zahl heidnischer Grabsteine errichtet wurde.³⁰ Besonders auffällig ist dabei eine Serie von Epitaphen der tetrarchischen Zeit mit bildlicher Darstellung des Verstorbenen, die für Soldaten verschiedener militärischer Einheiten aus dem Donauraum, die vorübergehend in der Stadt stationiert waren, errichtet wurden.³¹ Da die frühesten sicher datierbaren christlichen Grabsteine aus Aquileia in die 30er Jahre des 4. Jhs. gehören,³² ergab sich an diesem Ort offenbar eine zeitliche Überlappung von heidnischer und christlicher Grabsteinsitte.³³ Das unterscheidet Aquileia von anderen Städten des römischen Reiches, wo sich nach den Untersuchungen von Carlos GALVAO SOBRINHO zwischen dem Ende der paganen Funerär-

²⁸ Beim Bau der spätantiken Stadtmauer von Aquileia, deren genaue Chronologie zwar noch immer umstritten ist, deren erste Phase aber in das mittlere oder spätere 3. Jh. gehören dürfte, wurden zahlreiche offenbar vom Forum hierher verbrachte Statuenpostamente als Fundamentblöcke wiederverwendet, so IA 482a+b im Süden der Stadt oder IA 485/486a+b am Flußhafen. Selbst christliche Grabinschriften wurden etwa in der Nekropole von Concordia bereits nach recht kurzer Zeit einer neuen Nutzung zugeführt: ISTC p. 29.

²⁹ Dabei ergeben sich zwei grundsätzliche methodische Schwierigkeiten: Zum einen fällt es oft nicht leicht, bei den paganen Grabinschriften eine sichere Unterscheidung zu treffen zwischen einer Ansetzung in das (mittlere) 3. Jh. und einer Datierung in die Spätantike, also in das späte 3. oder frühere 4. Jh. Als Kriterium steht ohnehin zumeist nur die – immer mit einer gewissen Unsicherheit behaftete – Paläographie zur Verfügung; diese läßt sich aber in der Regel nur dort angemessen beurteilen, wo eine moderne Edition der Inschriften mit begleitender Photodokumentation vorliegt. Folglich wird die Zahl der spätantiken heidnischen Grabinschriften (gerade derjenigen aus der Zeit um 300) häufig unterschätzt. Zum anderen ist es bei (einigermaßen) sicher spätantik zu datierenden, jedoch beschädigten Inschriften oft nicht leicht zu entscheiden, ob es sich um pagane oder christliche Grabtituli handelt. Ich habe deswegen nur solche Inschriften als christlich klassifiziert, bei denen es eindeutige Indizien für eine solche Zuordnung gibt. Das hat wiederum zur Folge, daß die Zahl der christlichen Grabinschriften gerade in Aquileia ursprünglich um einiges höher gewesen sein dürfte als es in Anhang 1 ausgewiesen wird. Zur Vorsicht mahnt jedoch der Befund in Concordia, denn dort ist gut zu sehen, daß nicht notwendigerweise alle Inschriften von dem großen spätantiken Friedhof christlichen Charakter besessen haben müssen; vgl. dazu die Diskussion bei Mazzoleni 1987, 77f. und Novello 1996, 169f. Anm. 5.

³⁰ Mit diesem Befund scheint Aquileia in der Region einen gewissen Sonderfall darzustellen. Das könnte aber eben auch mit der besseren Publikationslage an diesem Ort zusammenhängen (vgl. die vorige Anm.), da hier durch die Photos in IA mehr Inschriften über die Schriftform in eine spätere Zeit datiert werden können als dies anderswo möglich ist.

³¹ Rebecchi 1976.

³² Zu den datierten christlichen Grabsteinen der Spätantike in Aquileia s. Forlati Tamaro 1974 sowie IA 2935–2942 (mit den Ergänzungen von Ferrua 1994, 163f.; Mazzoleni 1994, 210; AN 62, 1991, 219 Nr. 3 = AE 1992, 708). Die früheste datierte christliche Grabinschrift stammt aus dem Jahr 330 (IA 2935).

³³ Zu den christlichen Grabinschriften von Aquileia s. IA 2904ff. Diese Sammlung ist allerdings in vielen Punkten unvollständig; vgl. die Ergänzungen von Brusin 1967; Cuscito 1987 und Mazzoleni 1995. Vgl. ferner allgemein Mazzoleni 1982; Cuscito 1984a.

epigraphik im Laufe des 3. Jhs. und dem Aufkommen eines neuen, christlich geprägten *epigraphic habit* am Grab zumeist nicht vor dem späteren 4. Jh. eine deutliche Lücke beobachten läßt.³⁴ Für die anderen Städte von *Venetia et Histria* ist gerade dieser Punkt nicht so einfach zu bewerten, da es an aussagekräftigem Material fehlt. Immerhin zeigen zwei Städte mit einer relativ umfangreichen Serie gut publizierter Grabinschriften, daß die für Aquileia zu konstatierende Situation eventuell nicht auf diese Stadt beschränkt war: In Brixia dürften pagane Grabinschriften ebenfalls noch bis (mindestens) in das frühe 4. Jh. errichtet worden sein,³⁵ und in Concordia setzte die christliche Funerärepigraphik ähnlich früh ein wie in Aquileia – wenn nicht sogar noch früher, nämlich bereits im späteren 3. Jh., obwohl hier eine organisierte Christengemeinde unter einem eigenen Bischof erst für das späte 4. Jh. bezeugt ist.³⁶

Der Brauch, die Zugehörigkeit zur christlichen Religionsgemeinschaft auf (Grab)Inschriften kundzutun, setzte sich also zumindest in einigen Orten der Region und bei einigen Teilen der Bevölkerung schon recht frühzeitig durch. Dennoch kann für weite Teile des 4. Jhs. noch nicht von einer völligen Umwandlung der Inschriftenkultur im christlichen Sinne gesprochen werden, was sich auch im archäologischen Befund bestätigt:³⁷ Mit der erneuten Ausnahme von Aquileia sind nämlich monumentale Kirchenbauten in den Städten der Region nicht vor dem späteren 4. Jh. errichtet worden.³⁸ Bis in die Zeit um 400 kam es somit kaum zu einer auch nach außen deutlich sichtbaren Christianisierung der Stadtbilder, und selbst die kirchliche Organisation mußte in den meisten Gemeinden erst langsam aufgebaut werden.³⁹

³⁴ Vgl. die Tabellen bei Galvao-Sobrinho 1995, 463f. Abb. 2–4.

³⁵ Für einige (mögliche) Beispiele s. Anhang 4 Nr. 75–77; vgl. ferner Gregori 2002, 517. Gleichzeitig gibt es aus Brixia einige christliche Grabinschriften und Sarkophage, die sich in das frühe bzw. mittlere 4. Jh. datieren lassen; s. Anhang 6 Nr. 49 sowie Rep. II 86f. Nr. 248/49.

³⁶ Zu den christlichen Grabinschriften Concordias vgl. Lettich 1980; Mazzoleni 1987; Zovatto 1995. Die frühesten christlichen Inschriften wurden hier unzweifelhaft bereits in der ersten Hälfte des 4. Jhs. angefertigt. Umstritten bleibt hingegen die Frühdatierung der christlichen Grabinschrift ILCV 2753A = IRIC 188 = AE 1997, 578, die auf einem Sarkophag angebracht ist, der stilistisch in die Zeit um 250/70 (auf jeden Fall vor dem frühen 4. Jh.) gehört; vgl. Noviello 1997 und dazu den Kommentar in AE a.O. Gegen eine nachträgliche (d.h. eventuell erst im 4. oder 5. Jh. erfolgte) Anbringung der Inschrift wendet sich Lettich 1980, 254; IRIC p. 272; s. aber Mazzoleni 1987, 81f. und Noviello 1997, 151f., die diese Möglichkeit nicht von vorneherein ausschließen möchten, auch wenn das Schriftbild eher dagegen spricht.

³⁷ Ebenso war die Christianisierung gerade der städtischen Oberschichten ein langsamer Prozeß, der selbst im späteren 4. Jh. noch keineswegs zum Abschluß gekommen war; vgl. allgemein Lizzi 1991 sowie Rogger 2000 zu Tridentum.

³⁸ Vgl. den Überblick von Testino/Cantino Wataghin/Pani Ermini 1989 sowie Humphries 1999.

³⁹ Vgl. hierzu Picard 1988 sowie die Listen zu den einzelnen Bischofssitzen in PCBE II p. 2404–2427: Nur aus Aquileia war bereits ein Bischof auf dem Konzil von Arles im Jahre 314 vertreten. Im mittleren 4. Jh. gab es in drei weiteren Städten (Patavium, Verona, Brixia) mit Sicherheit einen Bischof, wozu im späteren 4. Jh. noch einmal vier oder fünf hinzukamen (Parentium, Emona, Altinum, Tridentum und wohl auch Concordia). Alle weiteren Bistümer der Region sind offenbar erst im Laufe des 5. oder frühen 6. Jhs. eingerichtet worden; für sechs Gemeinden lassen sich hingegen überhaupt keine (spätantiken) Bischöfe nachweisen.

Eine weitere einschneidende Veränderung in der Inschriftenkultur läßt sich dann jedoch an der Wende vom 4. zum 5. Jh. festmachen. Parallel zu den vielerorts in dieser Epoche faßbaren Kirchenbauprogrammen sowohl im intra- wie im extraurbanen Bereich erfolgte jetzt tatsächlich eine fast vollständige Christianisierung des *epigraphic habit*, der nun – nach dem Verschwinden der meisten anderen Inschriftengruppen – im wesentlichen von nur noch zwei Gattungen geprägt wurde: Stifterinschriften auf den Mosaikböden der Kirchen⁴⁰ und christliche Grabinschriften, die allerdings in den einzelnen Städten zahlenmäßig sehr unterschiedlich stark vertreten waren.⁴¹ Die von Wolf LIEBESCHUETZ propagierte Unterscheidung in eine *Late City* und eine *Later Late City* ist somit auch an dem Inschriftenmaterial Norditaliens deutlich abzulesen.

Versuch einer Deutung

Soweit die kurze Vorstellung des Materials; nun aber zu der – wesentlich heikleren Frage – der Interpretation dieses Befundes. Ich werde dabei nach den beiden oben herausgearbeiteten Zeitblöcken vorgehen, also zunächst das spätere 3. und 4. Jh. und sodann das 5. und 6. Jh. in Augenschein nehmen. Auf den ersten Blick liefert die beschriebene Entwicklung des *epigraphic habit* in *Venetia et Histria* eine scheinbare Bestätigung des Modells vom „decline“ der klassischen Stadtstrukturen ab dem mittleren 3. Jh. auch für Norditalien, und so ist sie teilweise auch schon interpretiert worden. Bei näherem Hinsehen sind an dieser These allerdings einige nicht unwesentliche Korrekturen vorzunehmen, wobei es mir vor allem wichtig erscheint, alle Inschriftengattungen einzubeziehen und darüber hinaus eine Kontextualisierung des Inschriftenmaterials durch die in den letzten Jahren stark vermehrten archäologischen Befunde zu versuchen.

Nicht zu leugnen ist auf jeden Fall das fast völlige Verschwinden der oben angesprochenen *civic inscriptions*, also der Ehren- und Laufbahninschriften von municipalen bzw. provinziellen Amtsträgern sowie von Tituli, die an (Bau)Stiftungen aus diesen Kreisen erinnerten. Dies ist aus zwei Gründen besonders auffällig: Zum einen ergibt sich ein starker Kontrast zur Situation in der hohen Kaiserzeit, als in den Städten der Region bis zum frühen 3. Jh. zahlreiche solcher Inschriften errichtet worden waren – besonders gut zu sehen ist dies etwa in Aquileia, Verona oder Brixia.⁴² Zum anderen werden für die Spätantike auch Unterschiede zu anderen Teilen Italiens deutlich. Es war nämlich keineswegs so,

⁴⁰ Vgl. allgemein zu dieser Inschriftengattung Mazzoleni 1986; dens. 1994; Caillet 1993; Zettler 2001. Der Begriff ‚Stifterinschriften‘ wird hier in dem unspezifischen Sinne verwendet, wie er in der altertumswissenschaftlichen Forschung üblich ist (vgl. ebd. 151).

⁴¹ Auffällig sind auch die Unterschiede im Formular und Aussehen der spätantiken Grabinschriften selbst bei Nachbarstädten wie Aquileia und Concordia. Letzteres wirkt dabei in vielen Bereichen traditioneller, da hier weniger typisch christliches Formengut übernommen worden ist, während die Repräsentationsfunktion der Sarkophagbestattungen im Vordergrund stand (s. ISTC p. 40f.; Mazzoleni 1987, 78; La Rocca 2001, 290f.; Dresken-Weiland 2003, 196 sowie o. Anm. 16).

⁴² Zu Aquileia s. IA; zu Verona und Brixia Breuer 1996; Gregori 1999.

daß die ‚klassische‘ Inschriftenkultur in allen Teilen der Apenninen-Halbinsel während des 4. Jhs. im gleichen Maße abgestorben war, denn in Mittel- und Süditalien findet sich aus dieser Zeit noch eine ganze Reihe solcher *civic inscriptions*, die im Norden fast gänzlich zu fehlen scheinen.⁴³

Wie sollte man nun aber dieses Phänomen interpretieren? Drei Erklärungsmöglichkeiten bieten sich an:

- 1) Eine schlechte ökonomische Lage: Den Menschen in den Städten habe schlicht das Geld gefehlt, um größere Monumente zu errichten oder Stiftungen zu tätigen. Das würde zum Bild einer allgemeinen ‚Krise der Städte‘ passen.
- 2) Ein starker Wandel im sozialen und politischen Bereich: Eine vor allem aus Aufsteigern neu zusammengesetzte Aristokratie habe keinen Sinn mehr für die althergebrachten Formen städtischer Kultur gehabt, zumal der öffentliche Raum der Städte an Attraktivität für die Zurschaustellung individueller Leistungen verloren habe, weil es kaum noch politische Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten im lokalen Rahmen gegeben und die munizipalen Oberschichten viel von ihrer einstmaligen gesellschaftlichen Bedeutung eingebüßt hätten.
- 3) Kulturelle Veränderungen: Es habe zwar durchaus noch einen Repräsentationswillen innerhalb der führenden Schichten der Städte gegeben, aber dieser habe sich nur noch teilweise in Inschriften manifestiert, und auch dort in anderer Gestalt als bisher, während gleichzeitig neue Formen der Selbstdarstellung aufkamen.

Die erste These, die das Verschwinden bestimmter Inschriftengruppen mit einem Niedergang des Städtewesens vor allem in ökonomischer Hinsicht verbindet,⁴⁴ ist zwar desöfteren vertreten worden, läßt sich aber gerade für Norditalien relativ leicht widerlegen. Hier hilft vor allem die Archäologie weiter. Die in den letzten 20 Jahren stark intensivierten stadttarchäologischen Untersuchungen haben nämlich gezeigt, daß in dieser Region trotz einer mancherorts ausgesprägten Rezessionsphase während des späteren 3. Jhs. von einem allgemeinen urbanistischen Niedergang während des 4. Jhs. keine Rede sein kann.⁴⁵ Vielmehr stellte diese Epoche in städtebaulicher Hinsicht durchaus eine dynamische Zeit dar, und zwar vielfach in wesentlich stärkerem Maße als in den Gemeinden im überurbanisierten Süden der Apenninen-Halbinsel. Diese Phase war zumindest in den größeren Städten von *Venetia et Histria*, aber auch in einigen der kleineren Orte geprägt von erheblichen Bauaktivitäten sowohl im öffentlichen wie im privaten Sektor, wobei es sich allerdings den Erfordernissen der Zeit entsprechend zu meist nicht um Neubauten handelte, sondern um Restaurierungen oder Veränderungen an dem überkommenen, für die meisten Bedürfnisse völlig ausreichenden Baubestand.

⁴³ Vgl. die Materialsammlung bei Ceconi 1994, 229–233 App. 4 sowie Lepelley 1992. Zu den Unterschieden im spätantiken *epigraphic habit* zwischen Nord- und Süditalien vgl. allgemein Ceconi 1994, 177–181 (mit einer m.E. nicht ganz zutreffenden Einschätzung); dens. 1998, 158 mit Anm. 59.

⁴⁴ Vgl. etwa Ward Perkins 1984.

⁴⁵ Vgl. die Überblicke bei Cantino Wataghin 1996 und Witschel 2004 sowie Marazzi, in diesem Band 33–65.

Diese Aktivitäten müssen finanziert worden sein, auch wenn aufgrund des weitgehenden Fehlens entsprechender Bauinschriften meist nicht mehr erkennbar ist, wer hierfür aufkam. Man sollte sich jedoch von der häufigen Erwähnung der Kaiser oder des Statthalters auf den wenigen noch verbliebenen Bautituli dieser Zeit⁴⁶ nicht zu der Annahme verleiten lassen, sämtliche Bauarbeiten in den Städten seien ausschließlich von staatlicher Seite bezahlt worden, weil den Gemeinden das Geld hierfür gefehlt hätte. Vielmehr ist eine solche Schlußfolgerung nur dann zulässig, wenn eine kaiserliche Stiftung in den Inschriften ausdrücklich vermerkt wird,⁴⁷ was immerhin im Zusammenhang mit Straßenbauarbeiten in unserer Region einige Male der Fall ist.⁴⁸ Ferner wissen wir mittlerweile durch einige Inschriftenneufunde, daß Kaiser Constantin in Aquileia den Ausbau der großen Thermen zumindest mitfinanzierte, die daraufhin nach ihm *thermae felices Constantinae* benannt wurden.⁴⁹ Die Nennung des Statthalters hingegen erfolgte aufgrund der nunmehr gültigen gesetzlichen Vorgaben, die von einer stärkeren Kontrolle des munizipalen Finanz- und Bauwesens durch zentrale Stellen ausgingen; sie muß aber keineswegs auf eine entsprechende finanzielle Beteiligung hindeuten.⁵⁰ Dies hat Claude LEPELLEY vor allem anhand des nordafrikanischen Quellenmaterials aufgezeigt.⁵¹ Solche von oben kommende Initiativen entsprachen also durchaus den Konventionen der Epoche im nunmehr provinzialisierten Italien.⁵² Dieselben Inschriften zeigen zudem, daß an diesen Bauprogrammen die lokalen Institutionen und Eliten ebenfalls mitwirkten, etwa als Bauaufseher (*curatores operum*) vor Ort. Zudem gibt es auch einige wenige Belege für rein lokale Initiativen.⁵³ Vor allem ist aber davon auszugehen, daß bei der Finanzierung dieser Maßnahmen zur Erhaltung der Bausubstanz – die, um es nochmals zu betonen, in den meisten Fällen gar nicht mehr inschriftlich dokumentiert wurden – städtische Gelder, die nun allerdings unter stärkerer staatlicher Aufsicht standen, eine erhebliche Rolle gespielt haben dürften.⁵⁴ Die Abhängigkeit der Gemeinden vom Euergetismus einzelner Bürger war nämlich keineswegs so groß, wie oft behauptet wird.⁵⁵ Dieser ‚klassische‘ Euergetismus war im

⁴⁶ s. Anhang 5a und b.

⁴⁷ Vgl. hierzu auch die Diskussion bei Cecconi 1994, 115–129, bes. 116 Anm. 27.

⁴⁸ s. Anhang 5a Nr. 1–3, 6.

⁴⁹ Anhang 5a Nr. 4/5.

⁵⁰ Zu unterscheiden ist hierbei zwischen solchen Aktivitäten, die die Statthalter im Rahmen ihrer Amtsausübung durchführten, und solchen, die sie als ‚Privatleute‘ vornahmen. Es gab nämlich durchaus auch einen persönlichen Euergetismus von seiten der Angehörigen der Zentralverwaltung in den Städten der Region, vor allem im christlichen Kontext; s. dazu Anhang 4 Nr. 34 (Aquileia), 62 (Vicetia), 66 (Patavium), eventuell auch Nr. 5 (Tergeste).

⁵¹ Lepelley 1999, bes. 246.

⁵² Vgl. zur Rolle der Statthalter im städtischen Leben des spätantiken Italien und zu den Möglichkeiten der Zusammenarbeit zwischen diesen und den lokalen Eliten Ausbüttel 1988, 156–160; Cecconi 1998 sowie dens., in diesem Band 286–297.

⁵³ s. Anhang 5c.

⁵⁴ Zu den städtischen Finanzen im spätantiken Italien vgl. Ausbüttel 1988, 65–69; Cecconi 1998, 155.

⁵⁵ Vgl. hierzu die grundlegende Studie von Eck 1997.

übrigen auch im spätantiken *Venetia et Histria* nicht völlig ausgestorben, wie einige Inschriften des 4. Jhs. zeigen,⁵⁶ darunter eine aus Tergeste, die von einem *munerarius* berichtet, der vor Ort Gladiatorenspiele veranstaltete.⁵⁷ Das paßt zum archäologisch-literarischen Befund in vielen Teilen des Reiches, der für das 4. Jh. die Erhaltung der meisten Spielstätten ausweist. Die öffentlichen Gebäude wurden also im 4. Jh. noch weitgehend gepflegt oder instandgesetzt, und zwar offenbar durch ein Zusammenwirken von kaiserlichen Stiftungen, statthalterlichen Initiativen, städtischen Finanzen und vereinzelt auch noch individuellem *Euergetismus*. Die Stadtbilder verharrten somit häufig auf ihrem in der hohen Kaiserzeit erreichten Zustand, ohne zunächst entscheidende Einbußen hinnehmen zu müssen. Anzeichen für eine tiefgreifende wirtschaftliche Krise sind jedenfalls nicht erkennbar.

Die zweite der oben angesprochenen Thesen, d.h. diejenige, die auf einschneidende sozio-politische Veränderungen als Auslöser für den Wandel in der Inschriftenkultur abhebt, ist zuletzt dezidiert von Wolf LIEBESCHUETZ vertreten worden: „The epigraphic habit was on the wane ... The rise and fall of the quantity of different kinds of evidence is in itself evidence of social change ... The decline of the epigraphic habit does ... coincide with a profound cultural change: the decline of the city as a political community“.⁵⁸ Ich selbst neige hingegen zumindest für das spätere 3. und 4. Jh. eher der dritten Interpretationsmöglichkeit zu, die davon ausgeht, daß der *epigraphic habit* in erster Linie als Abbild bestimmter mentaler Dispositionen zu sehen ist, die sich im Laufe der Zeit wandelten, und zudem in Rechnung stellt, daß ein städtisches Engagement seinen Ausdruck in dieser Zeit nicht mehr in jedem Falle in einem ‚Monument für die Ewigkeit‘ finden mußte. Dies sei im folgenden kurz ausgeführt.

Was den angeblichen sozialen Wandel betrifft, so ist zu bemerken, daß sich unter den inschriftlich bezeugten Mitgliedern der spätantiken Oberschichten in *Venetia et Histria*⁵⁹ tatsächlich einige soziale Aufsteiger zu befinden scheinen, soweit dies nach den in der Spätantike eingetretenen Veränderungen in der Onomastik überhaupt noch feststellbar ist.⁶⁰ Dies gilt aber durchaus nicht immer, denn wir finden auf den Inschriften eben auch Angehörige von *gentes*, die schon in der hohen Kaiserzeit eine führende Rolle in ihren Städten eingenommen hatten, so in Feltria und Vicetia.⁶¹ Vor allem ist aber durch nichts zu erweisen,

⁵⁶ s. Anhang 5d.

⁵⁷ Anhang 5d Nr. 1.

⁵⁸ Liebeschuetz 2001, 11–19 (bes. 11f. zu den Zitaten); vgl. auch Liebeschuetz 1996, 162–168.

⁵⁹ Zu diesen s. die Aufstellung in Anhang 4.

⁶⁰ Beispielsweise Anhang 4 Nr. 4 (Tergeste), 18 (Aquileia), 69 (Verona; dazu Alföldy 1999b), 77 (Brixia; vgl. zur spätantiken Gesellschaft der Stadt allgemein Gregori 1999, 303–313).

⁶¹ In Feltria gilt dies für Hostilius Flamininus (s. Anhang 4 Nr. 58 aus dem Jahr 323), denn bei den Hostilii handelte es sich um eine bereits während der Kaiserzeit gut bezeugte Familie der regionalen Aristokratie (vgl. die Belege bei Buchi 1995, 92f.). In Vicetia sind die Salonii, die ebenfalls schon im 1. und 2. Jh. lokale Beamte und sogar Senatoren stellten (s. CIL V 3102, 3117 = AE 1980, 508; vgl. Alföldy 1999c, 299f.; dens. 1999d), noch in der Zeit um 400 epigraphisch

daß die sozialen Aufsteiger radikal neue Wertvorstellungen entwickelt und sich nicht vielmehr den vorhandenen angepaßt hätten, wie es im Laufe der römischen Geschichte immer wieder geschehen war. Die These von einem sozialen Wandel als Auslöser der Veränderungen im lokalen *epigraphic habit* überzeugt also nicht wirklich.

Als nächstes wäre zu fragen, ob die Stadtgemeinde als politische Einheit auf den Inschriften überhaupt noch in Erscheinung trat. Hierzu muß ein Blick auf die städtischen Monumente zu Ehren der Kaiser geworfen werden. Als Zeichen der Loyalität waren sie seit jeher vor allem eine Sache des gesamten Gemeinwesens gewesen. Nun haben wir schon gesehen, daß in *Venetia et Histria* aus der Zeit nach der Mitte des 4. Jhs. praktisch keine statuarischen Ehrungen für Herrscher mehr vorliegen. An dieser Stelle ist jedoch eine andere Inschriftengattung einzubeziehen, nämlich die Meilensteine.⁶² Denn diese traten in der Region gehäuft gerade im 4. Jh. auf, und zwar bis an dessen Ende.⁶³ Gleichzeitig vollzog sich ein Wandel in ihrem Charakter: Sie dienten in der Regel nicht mehr der Erinnerung an tatsächliche Straßenbauarbeiten, sondern stellten Dedikationen an den regierenden Kaiser dar, nicht selten mit einem entsprechenden Formular, das dem der Ehreninschriften angeglichen wurde. Es ist also festzustellen, daß bei der Kaiserverehrung die Statuenbasen auf dem Forum im mittleren und späten 4. Jh. zunehmend durch die an den Fernstraßen aufgestellte Meilensteine mit entsprechenden Widmungen an die einzelnen Herrscher ersetzt wurden.⁶⁴ Die Initiative für deren Aufstellung wechselte vermutlich zwischen verschiedenen Institutionen.⁶⁵ Teilweise ging auch hier die ursprüngliche Idee vom Statthalter aus und wurde dann von den Städten umgesetzt, teilweise waren provinziale Behörden wie der Provinziallandtag verantwortlich.⁶⁶ In vielen Fällen waren hieran aber die

als Angehörige der Oberschicht bezeugt (Anhang 4 Nr. 61; dazu Cracco Ruggini 1987a, 280). Vgl. ferner die Turrani von Concordia: Anhang 4 Nr. 16 mit Anm. 125; Croce Da Villa/Di Filippo Balestrazzi 2001, 136f. Eine vergleichbare Familienkontinuität kann in einigen Fällen auch für niederere Schichten nachgewiesen werden (vgl. allgemein ISTC p. 38). Ein Beispiel hierfür sind die Cicerii von Concordia: Ein *Cicrius Severus Hvir* ist in zwei Inschriften des 2. Jhs. belegt (IRIC 36/37); sodann finden wir Freigelassene mit demselben Nomen auf Sarkophagen des späteren 3. Jhs. aus der *Necropoli di Levante* (IRIC 185–187); und schließlich gibt es noch einen weiteren, spätantiken Sarkophag, in dessen Inschrift eine *Cricia* (wohl verschrieben für *Cicria*) Victorina erwähnt wird (ISTC 73) und der eventuell aus demselben, somit über Jahrhunderte genutzten Grabbezirk stammt (Croce Da Villa 2002, 176).

⁶² Allgemein zu den Meilensteinen von *Venetia et Histria* vgl. Basso 1987.

⁶³ Vgl. zu den Meilensteinen den Überblick in Anhang 3.

⁶⁴ Vgl. zum folgenden ausführlicher Witschel 2002.

⁶⁵ Vgl. hierzu auch den interessanten Fall der vier Meilensteine Basso 1987, Nr. 79, 81; AE 1996, 704, 706 für Valentinian II., Theodosius I. und Arcadius (Dat.: 383–392) aus einem eng umgrenzten Gebiet, das aber möglicherweise zum Territorium zweier verschiedener Städte (Altinum und Opitergium; getrennt durch die Piave) gehörte. Auf allen diesen Meilensteinen findet sich ein fast identischer Text, der auch genau dieselben Fehler (*Theo<do>stio* sowie *Archladio*) aufweist. Basso 1996, 156 deutet dies als Hinweis auf einen gemeinsamen Auftrag der lokalen Behörden an eine einzige Werkstatt. Möglich wäre hier aber wohl auch eine fehlerhafte, von oben kommende Vorlage, eventuell anläßlich eines Aufenthaltes der Kaiser in der Region im Sommer 391.

⁶⁶ Dazu Basso 1990; Ceconi 1998, 160; Witschel 2002, 364–366.

städtischen Behörden offenbar zumindest mitbeteiligt. Auf dem Territorium der Städte wurden die Herrscher also weiterhin inschriftlich angesprochen, wenn auch in veränderten Formen. Selbst die verbliebenen Kaiserehrungen im Zentrum der Stadt wurden eventuell diesen neuen Konventionen angepaßt, wie zwei meilensteinartige Monumente aus Vicetia zeigen könnten.⁶⁷

Das wirft wiederum die Frage auf, inwieweit der öffentliche Raum der Städte von den Stadtgemeinden und ihren Bürgern noch genutzt wurde. Hierbei ist insbesondere ein Blick auf die Fora zu werfen, die in der hohen Kaiserzeit der bevorzugte Ort für die Ehrung von Herrschern und verdienten Bürgern gewesen waren. Verloren diese Plätze im 4. Jh. ihre zentrale Bedeutung für das Leben der Stadt? Das Fehlen von Ehreninschriften dieser Zeit und die soeben beschriebene Verlagerung der Loyalitätsbekundungen an die Kaiser auf die Fernstraßen könnten einen solchen Schluß nahelegen; er scheint mir aber nicht richtig zu sein, zumindest nicht in vollem Umfang. Zunächst einmal ist festzuhalten, daß in *Venetia et Histria* archäologisch kein Nachweis geführt werden kann, daß die Fora bereits im 4. Jh. aufgelassen worden wären.⁶⁸ Vielmehr wurden die Plätze zumindest in den größeren Städten einer neuen Funktion zugeführt, denn sie dienten nun als eine Art ‚Museen‘, auf denen besonders wertvolle Kunstwerke, darunter vor allem Götterstatuen, aufgestellt und bedeutende Figuren der Stadtgeschichte und des kulturellen Lebens vorgeführt wurden.⁶⁹ Besonders gut ist dies durch verschiedene epigraphische Neufunde nunmehr für Aquileia zu zeigen: Beachtenswert sind dabei zum einen die Inschriften, die vermutlich im frühen 4. Jh. nachträglich auf dem oberen Abschluß der Forumsportiken angebracht wurden. Sie nannten herausragende Persönlichkeiten der Stadtgeschichte von der Koloniegründung bis in die tetrarchische Zeit und waren wahrscheinlich mit entsprechenden Bildnissen verbunden.⁷⁰ Um die Mitte des 4. Jhs. ließ der (christliche!) Statthalter Septimius Theodulus mindestens drei Götterstatuen auf das Forum bringen und dort auf wiederverwendeten Statuenbasen aufstellen.⁷¹ Schließlich stand dort auch ein wohl ebenfalls dem 4. Jh. zuzuweisendes Standbild des ‚Vaters‘ von Vergil, wohl im Rahmen einer größeren Gruppe.⁷² Die

⁶⁷ s. Anm. 25.

⁶⁸ Vgl. hierzu Anm. 107: Dort, wo inzwischen genauere archäologische Beobachtungen vorliegen, kann davon ausgegangen werden, daß die Fora als öffentliche Plätze im 4. Jh. noch gepflegt wurden, während sich ihre Auflfassung bzw. Überbauung vielerorts in das 5. oder frühe 6. Jh. datieren läßt.

⁶⁹ Vgl. dazu demnächst in größerem Zusammenhang C. Witschel, Die Statuenausstattung spätantiker Platzanlagen in Italien und Africa, in: F.A. Bauer/C. Witschel (Hrsg.), Statuen und Statuensammlungen in der Spätantike – Funktion und Kontext; Akten des internat. Workshops München 2004 (in Vorbereitung).

⁷⁰ IA 649–654 (mit teilweise sicherlich falschen Rekonstruktionen); dazu zuletzt Maselli Scotti/Zaccaria 1998, 125–130 (mit einigen Neufunden) sowie Zaccaria 2000, 93f.

⁷¹ Anhang 5b Nr. 1–3; dazu Zaccaria 2000; dens. 2001.

⁷² AE 1987, 425 = AE 1990, 389 = AE 1993, 746. Hierbei handelt es sich um eine offenbar im 4. Jh. wiederverwendete Statuenbasis, die vermutlich Teil einer – verlorenen – Statuengruppe war, welche weitere Mitglieder aus der Familie Vergils vorführte; dazu Paci 1987; Mayer 1993; Maselli Scotti/Zaccaria 1998, 154f.; Zaccaria 2000, 95; Cecconi 2000, 53 mit Anm. 29.

Umsetzung von Götterstatuen(?) auf das Forum durch die jeweiligen Statthalter ist darüber hinaus auch für Brixia und Verona im mittleren bzw. späteren 4. Jh. nachzuweisen.⁷³ Darüber hinaus ist eine solche Fürsorge für den vorhandenen Statuenbestand im späteren 4. Jh. auch in vielen anderen Teilen des römischen Reiches zu fassen.⁷⁴ Dabei scheint insbesondere der ästhetische Wert der Standbilder eine Rolle gespielt zu haben, die nun in erster Linie zur Schmückung der Platzanlagen dienten, was in den Inschriften des Theodulus durch die Betonung des Verbes *ornavit* ausdrücklich hervorgehoben wird.⁷⁵ Hinzu kamen offensichtlich retrospektive Tendenzen, die sich unter anderem darin manifestierten, daß man bewußt Monumente, die für die Vergangenheit der Stadt wichtig waren, wiederverwendete oder auf dem Platz beließ.⁷⁶ Jedenfalls deutet alles darauf hin, daß der öffentliche Raum im 4. Jh. noch als solcher wahrgenommen wurde, wenn auch unter veränderten Bedingungen, denn er war nun nicht mehr der zentrale Ort für aktuelle politische „Inszenierungen“ – zumindest nicht für solche, die in dauerhaften Medien wie (neugefertigten) Inschriften und Statuen festgehalten wurden.⁷⁷

Wie verhielten sich nun die städtischen Oberschichten in diesem Rahmen? Lokale Eliten, die über einigen Reichtum verfügten, waren ja in *Venetia et Histria* durchaus noch vorhanden, wie gerade der epigraphische Befund verdeutlicht, der im Gesamtbild eine nicht geringe Zahl von Oberschichtangehörigen des 4.-6. Jhs. zu erkennen gibt.⁷⁸ Dabei handelt es sich allerdings zumeist um Angehörige des Senatorenstandes bzw. um *honorati* oder *principales* sowie um *officiales* und nicht um einfache *curiales*⁷⁹ – also um Mitglieder der neuen, informeller zusammengesetzten Elite der *Later Late City* nach LIEBESCHUETZ.⁸⁰

Bereits ab dem späteren 3. Jh. hatten sich diese Schichten in ihrem nach wie vor vorhandenen Selbstdarstellungsbedürfnis offenbar neu orientiert, wie ich zusammen mit Barbara BORG an anderer Stelle ausführlicher zu zeigen versucht habe.⁸¹ Die vorher so bedeutenden Ehrenstatuen und -inschriften verloren dabei stark an Wertschätzung, während andere Formen der gesellschaftlichen Repräsentation in den Vordergrund traten. An erster Stelle zu nennen ist in diesem

⁷³ s. Anhang 5b Nr. 4-6. Vgl. ferner die Zusammenstellung der Zeugnisse bei Zaccaria 2000, 102-104.

⁷⁴ Dazu grundlegend Lepelley 1994.

⁷⁵ Vgl. Zaccaria 2001, 491f.

⁷⁶ So standen offenbar noch in der Spätantike einige wichtige republikanische Monumente auf dem Forum von Aquileia (Maselli Scotti/Zaccaria 1998, 143, 152-154; Zaccaria 2000, 94). Auch bei der Auswahl der wiederzuverwendenden Denkmäler griff man offenbar teilweise auf für die Stadtgeschichte besonders bedeutsame Standbilder zurück, so etwa die Statue der Concordia zwischen den Gemeinde Aquileia und Concordia (s. Anhang 5b Nr. 3).

⁷⁷ Vgl. zu dieser Umwertung des öffentlichen Raumes im 4. Jh. auch Lepelley 2002, der von einem „espace neutre“ spricht.

⁷⁸ s. Anhang 4 mit über 50 epigraphischen Belegen. Hinzu kommt die literarische Überlieferung; vgl. dazu Pietri 1982; Cecconi 2000, 50f.

⁷⁹ s. Anm. 94.

⁸⁰ Liebeschuetz 2001, 104-136.

⁸¹ Borg/Witschel 2001.

Kontext die architektonische Umgestaltung und reiche Ausstattung der Privathäuser, wie wir sie vor allem in Aquileia,⁸² aber auch in Brixia fassen können.⁸³ Eine große Rolle spielte anscheinend auch das prunkvolle Auftreten in der Öffentlichkeit in reicher Gewandung.⁸⁴ Plastisch ausgemalt wird dies in einer literarischen Quelle, die schildert, wie die *nobilitas* von Emona im Jahre 388 den Kaiser Theodosius begrüßte: Man sah die *curiales* (*senatores*) in ihren weißen Roben und die (heidnischen!) *flamines* in ihrem „municipalen Purpur“.⁸⁵ Eine ähnliche Aufmachung zeigen nun interessanterweise die Bildnisse auf dem Mosaikboden der theodorianischen Südaula in Aquileia aus konstantinischer Zeit. Falls es sich bei ihnen tatsächlich um die PorträtDarstellungen reicher Stifter handelt, die den Bau der Kirche mitfinanziert hatten (was allerdings keineswegs sicher ist),⁸⁶ so könnte man hier schon für das frühe 4. Jh. eine Veränderung in der Selbstdarstellung der Eliten postulieren, die von den öffentlich aufgestellten Statuen auf dem Forum weg- und zu einer Würdigung der eigenen Leistung im Innenraum der Kirchen führte. Gleichzeitig wird in diesen Bildnissen erneut deutlich, wie wichtig das in Kleidung und Schmuck zum Ausdruck kommende äußere Erscheinungsbild für das Selbstverständnis der spätantiken Eliten war.

⁸² Vgl. Février 1981; Mirabella Roberti 1987; Jäggi 1990, 170f.

⁸³ Vgl. zusammenfassend Brogiolo 1993. Das gilt allerdings in vollem Umfang nur für das 4. Jh., während sich die Situation im 5./6. Jh. in dieser Hinsicht problematisch darstellt: Gerade in Brixia ist deutlich zu erkennen, daß die reichen *domus* der Oberschicht, die an verschiedenen Stellen der Stadt (so unter S. Giulia und in der via Alberto Mario) ergraben wurden, von den Umwandlungsprozessen des 5. Jhs. erfaßt wurden und architektonisch verarmten (eine ähnliche Situation ist in Concordia auszumachen: Croce Da Villa/Di Filippo Balestrazzi 2001, 140. 179f.). Im etwa gleichen Zeitraum wurden aber auch viele der luxuriös ausgestatteten Villen im Umland, etwa im Umkreis des Garda-Sees, aufgelassen oder nur noch rudimentär weiterbesiedelt (vgl. Mancassola/Saggioro 2001; Witschel 2004, 141. 162). Es bleibt daher die Frage, wo denn die epigraphisch noch gut bezeugten lokalen Eliten des 5./6. Jhs. gelebt haben könnten – tatsächlich in den heruntergekommenen und von ärmlichen Einbauten entstellten Häusern? Von ostentativen Repräsentationsbemühungen im Privatwohnbereich kann für diese Zeit jedenfalls nicht mehr gesprochen werden. Vgl. auch Loseby, in diesem Band 95f., zu der ähnlich gelagerten Problematik in Gallien.

⁸⁴ An diesem Kleiderluxus der spätantiken Oberschichten haben die Kirchenführer immer wieder vehemente Kritik geübt, so auch in unserer Region; vgl. etwa Gaudent. serm. 13, 33 (CSEL 68, 123).

⁸⁵ Paneg. 2 (12), 37, 4: *Quid ego referam pro moenibus suis festum liberae nobilitatis occursum, conspicuos veste nivea senatores, reverendos municipali purpura flamines, insignes apicibus sacerdotes?*

⁸⁶ Zu den Bildnissen vgl. Kähler 1962. Die Deutung als Stifterporträts hat insbesondere Cailliet 1993, 141. (ebenso Mazzoleni 1986, 318) vertreten. Vgl. zu ähnlichen Bildnissen im Ostteil des Reiches Baumann 1999, der aber einer analogen Deutung des Befundes in Aquileia skeptisch gegenübersteht, da hier entsprechende Namensbeischriften fehlen (ebd. 263–265). Zuletzt hat sich Zettler 2001, 127–136, 141f, 145 zusammenfassend mit der Problematik auseinandergesetzt und ist zu ähnlichen Ergebnissen wie Baumann gelangt: Auch er sieht in den porträtartigen Mosaikbildnissen keine Abbildungen von individuellen, namentlich benennbaren Stiftern, sondern höchstens eine Vergegenwärtigung des Stifter-Kollektivs, eher aber „fiktive“ PorträtDarstellungen. Ferner gibt es nicht unberechtigte Zweifel daran, ob der Bau in seiner ersten Phase des frühen 4. Jhs. überhaupt als Kirche gedient hat; vgl. dazu Ristow 1994.

Man wird hier also von einer Art ‚temporärer Repräsentation‘ sprechen dürfen, die die vorher populären ‚Denkmäler für die Ewigkeit‘ zunehmend ersetzte.⁸⁷

Die zuletzt angesprochenen ‚Stifterbilder‘ verweisen zudem auf ein neues Betätigungsfeld verschiedener städtischer Bevölkerungsschichten, nämlich auf den christlichen Euergetismus. Dieser manifestierte sich ab dem späteren 4. Jh. auch in vielen anderen Städten der Region im epigraphischen Befund, und zwar vor allem auf den Fußböden der nun zahlreich entstehenden Kirchenbauten.⁸⁸ Wir finden hier Mosaikinschriften, in denen zunächst, d.h. um 400, eine Zurücknahme des eigenen Anspruchs auf soziale Distinktion zu erkennen war, etwa durch einen Verzicht auf Rang- oder Berufsbezeichnungen.⁸⁹ Auf der anderen Seite kamen anonyme Stiftungen, die im christlichen Sinne betonten, daß Gott den Namen des Stifters ja kenne, zwar vor, blieben aber die Ausnahme.⁹⁰ Zudem verwiesen die Angaben zur Größe der gestifteten Fläche auf erhebliche Reichtumsunterschiede. Im Laufe des 5. Jhs. wurden dann auch Rangangaben wieder häufiger, und wir sehen uns dadurch mit einer immer noch stark stratifizierten städtischen Gesellschaft mit einer Führungsgruppe von Senatoren und *honorati*, aber auch mit Klerikern,⁹¹ Soldaten⁹² und Angehörigen der Mittelschichten kon-

⁸⁷ Dieser Erklärungsansatz wird allerdings nicht allgemein akzeptiert; s. dagegen etwa Liebeschuetz 2001, 11: „... it will not do – at least in my opinion – to explain what is a highly conspicuous transformation of public behaviour simply in terms of taste or fashion“; sowie dens., in diesem Band 463f.

⁸⁸ Zu beachten ist dabei, daß durch den weitgehenden Verlust der Wanddekorationen in den Kirchen (mit der Ausnahme der Eufrasius-Basilica in Parentium; s. Anm. 110) ein für die Repräsentation sehr wichtiger Teil der Innenausstattung für uns nicht mehr zugänglich ist. Gerade an den Wänden werden sich aber teilweise die eindrucksvollsten (Mosaik)Inschriften befunden haben, wie wir sie etwa durch die literarische Überlieferung in Gallien kennen; vgl. dazu Pietri 1988.

⁸⁹ Vgl. Cuscito 1972a, 253. Auch durch bestimmte Wendungen in den Inschriften wurde das neue Wertesystem angedeutet, so durch die Betonung, daß eine Stiftung *de dono/donis Dei* o.ä. erfolgt sei. Diese Formulierung findet sich im gesamten Zeitraum vom frühen 4. bis zum späten 6. Jh. auf Mosaikinschriften in den Kirchen von Parentium, Aquileia, Tridentum und besonders häufig in Jesolo. Daneben ist sie auch in zwei christlichen Grabinschriften des früheren 4. Jhs. in Concordia belegt: ISTC 3 (dort in der etwas merkwürdig anmutenden Kombination *[ar]cam ex proprio suo de [dono] Dei vivus sibi compara[vit]*) und 5. Zu Herkunft und Verbreitung der Formel vgl. Vössing 1998.

⁹⁰ Von ca. 270 christlichen Stifterinschriften geben nur fünf (aus Pola, Parentium, Aquileia und Grado) den Namen des Spenders bewußt nicht zu erkennen; s. beispielhaft SI 27 = InscrIt X 2, 66 = Cailliet 1993, 311 Nr. 9 (aus der ‚Prae-Eufrasiana‘ in Parentium): *Culus numen D(eu)s nuvet(!) pro voto suo fle(c)it p(e)d(es) XIII*. Vgl. hierzu Cailliet 1993, 463–465; Zettler 2001, 157f. An diesen Inschriften ist am deutlichsten ein neuer Trend der christlichen Stiftermentalität erkennbar, bei dem die Fürsorge für das individuelle Seelenheil (vgl. auch Cailliet 1993, 450, 468f.; Zettler 2001, 52) im Vordergrund stand, verbunden mit einem Demutsgestus. Allen diesen Inschriften wohnt somit ein gewisses Spannungsverhältnis inne zwischen dem offenbar fortdauernden, aus dem ‚klassischen‘ Euergetismus übernommenen Wunsch, die eigene Leistung für die Gemeinde herauszustellen, und einem neuen, christlichen Bedürfnis, hiermit eine persönliche Nähe zu Gott herzustellen.

⁹¹ Zu diesen s. Anhang 6; vgl. ferner Cuscito 1974.

⁹² Insgesamt sind in den spätantiken Inschriften von *Venetia et Histria* fast 100 Soldaten und Veteranen belegt, von einfachen *milites* bis hin zu höherrangigen Offizieren. Diese Inschrif-

frontiert,⁹³ wobei die Mehrzahl der Stifter keine Mitglieder der kirchlichen Hierarchie, sondern Laien waren. Auffällig bleibt das weitgehende Fehlen von *curiales*, wie auch die städtischen Behörden im 5./6. Jh. auf den Inschriften kaum noch auftauchen.⁹⁴ Insgesamt sind jedoch trotz aller deutlich erkennbaren christlichen Neuerungen die Verbindungen zum ‚klassischen‘ Euergetismus in diesen Mosaikinschriften nicht zu übersehen:⁹⁵ Sie sprachen weiterhin eine größere Öffentlichkeit an, wobei sich vielfach ein Streben nach bevorzugten Plätzen innerhalb der Kirche⁹⁶ oder nach einer besonderen Aufmachung der Inschriften etwa durch

ten sind auf wenige Orte konzentriert, vor allem auf Aquileia (37), Concordia (51) und Brixia (6; dazu Gregori 2002, 514). Bei dem allergrößten Teil von ihnen handelt es sich um (christliche und nicht-christliche) Grabinschriften; es finden sich jedoch auch einige christliche Stifterinschriften, die an Spenden von Soldaten erinnerten.

⁹³ So finden wir (hauptsächlich in Grab-, aber auch in christlichen Stifterinschriften) eine Reihe von Handwerkern und Händlern (23 Belege), Lehrern und Ärzten (8) sowie Sklaven und Freigelassenen (13 unter Einschluß einiger unsicherer Zeugnisse); vgl. ferner Pietri 1982, 132f. Auffällig ist auch die relativ hohe Zahl von Fremden (ca. 90 Belege), die in den spätantiken Inschriften (und gerade auch in den Stifterinschriften) von *Venetia et Histria* auftauchen. Darunter befinden sich viele Soldaten, aber auch Händler sowie weitere Personen, von denen wir nicht wissen, warum sie nach Nordostitalien gekommen sind. Einen besonders starken Anteil unter diesen Fremden machen Menschen aus dem Orient, insbesondere aus Syrien, aus, die vor allem in den Inschriften von Tergeste, Aquileia, Concordia (s. Forlati Tamaro 1977; Feissel 1980) und Tridentum bezeugt sind; vgl. allgemein Solin 1983, bes. 738–746.

⁹⁴ Epigraphische Belege für municipale Beamte bzw. für *curiales* aus der Zeit zwischen dem späten 3. und dem Ende des 6. Jhs. sind tatsächlich in *Venetia et Histria* – wie auch in vielen anderen Regionen des Reiches – eher selten (vgl. Liebeschuetz 2001, 18). Ich habe maximal neun Inschriften zusammenstellen können, in denen *curiales* erwähnt werden. Hierzu gehören drei in ihrer chronologischen Einordnung unsichere (da eventuell auch in das mittlere 3. Jh. datierbare) Belege aus Aquileia, Iulia Concordia und Brixia (Anhang 4 Nr. 17, 44, 75); zwei weitere Inschriften aus Iulia Concordia (eine davon verweist auf einen Ortsfremden; die zweite Person ist hingegen nur vage benannt; ebd. Nr. 46/47); zwei (oder drei?) Amtsträger von Iulium Carnicum auf den Felsinschriften am Passo di Monte Croce Carnico (ebd. Nr. 14/15); die Nennung verschiedener municipaler Institutionen in einer Inschrift aus Feltria (ebd. Nr. 58) sowie die Grabinschrift eines *principalis*(?) aus Vicetia (ebd. Nr. 60). Auch die städtischen Behörden in ihrer Gesamtheit (also etwa der *ordo* bzw. die *curia*) fanden nach dem frühen/mittleren 4. Jh. nur noch selten Erwähnung auf Inschriften. Ein ähnliches Bild bietet die literarische Überlieferung des 6. Jhs. zu *Venetia et Histria*. Hier werden *curiales* ebenfalls nur noch selten explizit bezeugt; hingegen tauchen schwerer zu fassende Gruppen wie die *possessores* als städtische Führungsschicht auf, so in Feltria (Cassiod. var. 5, 9) oder in Verona (ebd. 12, 4). Daraus kann aber keinesfalls geschlossen werden, die *curiales* seien bereits frühzeitig aus dem Leben der Städte verschwunden. So werden beispielsweise noch im frühen 6. Jh. die *honorati*, *possessores*, *defensores* und *curiales* von Tridentum nebeneinander angesprochen (ebd. 2, 17).

⁹⁵ Vgl. Caillat 1993, 403, 409f.; Zettler 2001, 148–151.

⁹⁶ Das gilt allerdings keineswegs in allen Fällen, da auf einigen Kirchenböden die Inschriften eher wie ‚zufällig‘ verstreut wirken, was auf die Vorstellungen der ausführenden Mosaizisten zurückgehen könnte (so Mazzoleni 1994, 207). Nicht immer ergibt sich zudem eine sichtbare Korrelation zwischen dem sozialen Status der Stifter und der Platzierung ihrer Inschriften. Auf der anderen Seite existieren aber genügend aussagekräftige Befunde, bei denen einzelne Inschriften deutlich herausgehoben erscheinen (so auch Zettler 2001, 86, 88, 94, 96, 101, 116). Diese verweisen häufig auf Mitglieder der Oberschicht oder auf die Bischöfe als die offiziellen Bauherren. Zu sehen ist dies etwa in der Basilica Via Madonna del Mare in Tergeste, wo die

Goldbuchstaben oder rote Unterstrich-Linien beobachten läßt,⁹⁷ wodurch die Aufmerksamkeit des Betrachters auf den Stifter gelenkt werden sollte.⁹⁸ Und auch sie dienten offensichtlich dazu, den Namen des jeweiligen Stifters für die Nachwelt zu bewahren.⁹⁹

Ein wesentlich deutlicherer Wertewandel ist auf dem zweiten wichtigen Sektor des *epigraphic habit* im 5. und 6. Jh. auszumachen, nämlich im Bereich der nunmehr ausschließlich christlichen Funerärepi-graphik. In den im Laufe des 4. Jhs. immer zahlreicher werdenden christlichen Grabinschriften wurden nämlich bis auf wenige Ausnahmen nicht mehr die alten, auf ein Leben in der Öffentlichkeit bezogenen *virtutes* herausgestellt,¹⁰⁰ sondern neue, christliche Werte, die vor allem den Bereich des Ehe- und Privatlebens und des guten Auskommens mit den Mitmenschen betrafen.¹⁰¹ Die Grabinschriften hatten aber noch einen anderen wichtigen Zweck, nämlich vor der gesamten Gemeinde plakativ den (guten) christlichen Glauben des Verstorbenen zu betonen.¹⁰² Unter-

Tituli des *vir illustris* Apronianus und zweier *defensores ecclesiae* (s. Anhang 4 Nr. 5–7) eine hervorragende Position einnehmen; oder in der Kirche SS. Felice e Fortunato in Vicetia, wo die Stifterinschriften der *clarissimi* (ebd. Nr. 59) auffällig in der Mittelachse des Gebäudes nahe beim Eingang plazi-ert sind (Cracco Ruggini 1987a, 296f.; Caillet 1993, 95; Plan in Mirabella Roberti et al. 1979, 40f.). Die Hervorhebung des Bischofs in den Mosaikinschriften ist besonders deutlich an der Apsisinschrift der Eufasiana in Parentium (Anhang 6 Nr. 7) und bei den Tituli des Bischofs Helias in der Basilica S. Eufemia in Grado (ebd. Nr. 25) zu erkennen.

⁹⁷ Vgl. Cuscito 1972a, 241; Caillet 1993, *passim*.

⁹⁸ Vgl. zu den möglichen Motiven der christlichen Stifter auch Jäggi/Meier 1997, 191–194 mit Verweis auf Nov. Iust. 67, 2 (538), wo auf die Erbauer von Kirchen angespielt wird, die dies nur taten, um sich (kurzfristig) einen Namen als *conditores ecclesiae* zu machen.

⁹⁹ Gerade Zettler 2001, 151–164 betont die Memorialfunktion der spätantiken Mosaikinschriften. Diese habe allerdings vorrangig auf eine Kommemoration der Spender bei Gott und somit auf deren Seelenheil abgezielt, wie es auch im liturgischen Gebetsgedenken zum Ausdruck kam, das Zettler in engem Zusammenhang mit den Inschriften sieht (letztere seien nämlich „schriftlich fixierte ‚Überreste‘ des liturgischen Gebetsgedenkens“; ebd. 156). Das ist sicherlich nicht unrichtig, unterschätzt aber vielleicht doch etwas die durchaus direkte Form, mit der die Inschriften jeden Besucher einer Kirche ansprachen und damit sehr konkret auf die Leistungen der Stifter hinwiesen, was wiederum zu deren gesellschaftlicher Distinktion und Repräsentation dienen konnte. Letzteren Aspekt hat im übrigen auch Baumann 1999, *passim* als wichtig für die Ausstattung von Kirchen im Heiligen Land herausgestellt.

¹⁰⁰ Zur nach außen gerichteten Repräsentation am Grab während der hohen Kaiserzeit, die sich in Aquileia vor allem entlang der großen Gräberstraßen zeigte, vgl. Reusser 1987; Zaccaria 1995; Verzár-Bass 1998. Zu beachten ist allerdings, daß Größe und Ausstattung der Gräber nicht immer in direkter Korrelation zum sozialen Status des Verstorbenen standen; vgl. Eck 1998. Hinzu kommt das Problem, ob diejenigen Inschriften, die im Inneren von Grabkammern angebracht wurden, tatsächlich für einen größeren Betrachterkreis sichtbar waren; vgl. dazu Feraudi-Gruénais 2001, bes. 208f. Anm. 28, die sich dagegen wendet, den Inschriften aufgrund eines solchen Aufstellungsortes jegliche repräsentative Funktion abzusprechen (s. auch u. Anm. 102).

¹⁰¹ Die wichtigsten Belege hierzu hat Cuscito 1972b zusammengestellt.

¹⁰² Vgl. Galvão-Sobrinho 1995. Ein großes Problem bleibt allerdings die Kontextualisierung vieler christlicher Grabinschriften, da sie zu einem erheblichen Teil nicht *in situ* gefunden worden sind. Damit stellt sich die Frage, wer denn diese Grabdenkmäler eigentlich sehen konnte und zu welchen Anlässen dies geschah. Gerade bei den Grabinschriften von Aquileia ist dies häufig ganz unklar (vgl. Mazzoleni 1982, 304), da gut beobachtete Fundkomplexe fehlen (vgl.

strichen wurde dies auf vielen Grabsteinen zumindest in Aquileia¹⁰³ durch bildliche Darstellungen des Verstorbenen, die diesen in Gestalt eines Oranten im Jenseits zeigten.¹⁰⁴ Natürlich wurde damit vor allem die spirituelle Ebene angesprochen, aber in einigen der – nicht besonders aufwendig gestalteten – Zeichnungen wurde doch erkennbar großer Wert darauf gelegt, den Dargestellten in standesgemäßer Kleidung, teilweise mit entsprechenden Abzeichen wie *clavi*, vorzuführen. Manchmal ist gerade bei den Frauen auch das Tragen von Schmuck explizit angegeben.¹⁰⁵ Ich möchte zumindest die Hypothese formulieren, daß mit diesen Abbildungen auch eine gewisse Repräsentationsabsicht im christlichen Kontext verbunden war. Hinzu kommt, wie gerade der großflächig untersuchte Friedhof in Concordia gezeigt hat, daß sich keineswegs alle Personen aufwendigere Gräber mit Steinausstattung oder gar Sarkophage mit einer Inschrift leisten

jetzt aber AN 68, 1997, 396–406 zu Grado sowie zu den Sonderformen der Grabmosaiken und *mensae* Bertacchi 1974, 83–91; Duval 1985). Es steht zwar zu vermuten, daß die meisten der christlichen Grabsteine von einem der größeren suburbanen Friedhöfe stammen, die sich im Umkreis der Stadt herausgebildet hatten (s. Jäggi 1990, 179–185 mit Abb. 5), aber wo genau die gerade für Aquileia so typischen, kleinformatigen und häufig verzierten Grabtafeln (s.u. Anm. 103f.) angebracht waren, ist fast in keinem Fall mehr sicher zu ermitteln (solche Grabtafeln konnten augenscheinlich auch neben Amphorenbestattungen aufgestellt sein; s. Bertacchi 1974, 86). Immerhin liegt nun in der Region mit der frühchristlichen Märtyrer- und Friedhofskirche unter S. Vigilio in Tridentum in ihrer Umbauphase des späten 5. Jhs. ein hervorragend erschlossener Befund vor, der zeigen kann, wie die beschrifteten Grabplatten über den Gräbern angebracht waren, so daß diese gleichzeitig den Fußboden des Kirchenbaues bildeten (Mazzoleni 2001, bes. 382, 385; Cavada/Rogger 2001, bes. 600f.). Vgl. ferner die neuen Ergebnisse zur Anbringung der frühchristlichen Grabtafeln in Trier: Neyses 2003. Sowohl in Tridentum wie in Trier haben sich dabei deutliche soziale Abstufungen beobachten lassen.

Während in Aquileia nur relativ wenige spätantike Sarkophage gefunden wurden (s. aber Brusin 1967, 45–47; in Rep. II sind insgesamt neun verzierte Sarkophage aus Aquileia aufgeführt), kommen diese in anderen Städten, so vor allem in Concordia, häufiger vor, wo sie nach allgemeiner Ansicht in den Nekropolen unter freiem Himmel (*sub divo*) aufgestellt und somit frei zugänglich waren (vgl. Anm. 17). Das war aber nicht unbedingt die Regel: Zuletzt hat sich Dresken-Weiland 2003, 98–198 ausführlich mit dieser Problematik auseinandergesetzt und dabei herausgearbeitet, daß viele Sarkophage und deren Inschriften nach der Bestattung nicht mehr allgemein zugänglich oder auch nur sichtbar gewesen sein können, da sie in engen Grabkammern standen oder in den Boden versenkt wurden. Es läßt sich sogar vermuten, daß sich die Verzierung eines Sarkophages teilweise eher an den Verstorbenen richtete als an die Außenwelt (vgl. die Diskussion ebd. 185–198). Allerdings war eben auch die Umgebung einer Sarkophagbestattung bedeutsam. Gerade die Wohlhabenden bevorzugten hierbei reich ausgestattete, repräsentative Mausoleen in der Nähe von Heiligengräbern, innerhalb derer einzelne Sarkophage sehr wohl auffällig präsentiert werden konnten, wie etwa die Befunde in Salona und in Concordia (Grabkapelle der Faustiniana; s.u. Anm. 145f.) verdeutlichen.

¹⁰³ Die insgesamt 136 christlichen Grabsteine mit Abbildungen stammen fast ausschließlich aus Aquileia und der engeren Umgebung; die einzige Ausnahme hiervon könnte der Stein AE 1995, 598 bilden, falls er tatsächlich ursprünglich im Territorium von Patavium aufgestellt war (vgl. zu dieser Problematik Anm. 20, 193).

¹⁰⁴ Vgl. hierzu Forlati-Tamara 1973/74; Bisconti 1987; Mazzoleni 1995, 789f. Daneben gibt es auch einige wenige Darstellungen, die den Verstorbenen im realen Leben bei der Ausübung seines Berufes oder als Soldaten zeigen: Bisconti 1987, 300–308.

¹⁰⁵ Vgl. etwa Piccottini 1981.

konnten. Auch in diesem Bereich wurden also weiterhin gesellschaftliche Unterschiede deutlich zum Ausdruck gebracht.¹⁰⁶

Begleitet wurden diese erneuten Veränderungen in der Inschriftenkultur von einer deutlichen städtebaulichen Zäsur während der ersten Hälfte des 5. Jhs., die sich archäologisch mittlerweile recht gut fassen, wenn auch nicht immer genauer datieren läßt. In den meisten Städten wurden nun die Fora (und andere öffentliche Gebäude) aufgelassen oder einer neuen Funktion zugeführt, wodurch sie ihren Rang als wichtigstes öffentliches Zentrum in der antiken Stadt verloren.¹⁰⁷ Ersetzt wurden sie in dieser Funktion zunehmend durch kirchliche Gebäudegruppen, vor allem die Kathedralen und die suburbanen Märtyrerkirchen, die gerade zu dieser Zeit vermehrt entstanden bzw. ausgebaut wurden. Zunächst waren diese Anlagen zumeist noch in die vorhandenen urbanen Strukturen eingepaßt und befanden sich – häufig inmitten von Wohnquartieren – eher in einer Randlage. Im Laufe des 5. Jhs. setzte man sich aber beim Kirchenbau zunehmend über die vorgefundenen Gegebenheiten hinweg und suchte nach Möglichkeiten, auch zentralere Positionen in der Stadt einzunehmen.¹⁰⁸ Wir beobachten also gleichzeitig mit dem Verfall der öffentlichen Anlagen ein groß angelegtes Kirchenbauprogramm unter Einsatz erheblicher Finanzmittel, das die Stadtbilder nachhaltig

¹⁰⁶ Gerade im Bereich der *Necropoli di Levante* in Concordia wird deutlich, welche sozialen Abstufungen es bei den Bestattungsarten gab: Nur ein Teil der Bevölkerung konnte sich die vermutlich recht teuren, allerdings wenig verzierten Sarkophage leisten, während der Rest mit einfacheren (und offenbar durchgehend anepigraphischen) Ziegelgräbern oder mit Bestattungen aus (zumeist wiederverwendeten) Steinplatten sowie in Amphoren vorlieb nehmen mußte (ISTC p. 32f.; Croce Da Villa/Di Filippo Balestrazzi 2001, 205f.). Ähnlich scheint die Situation in der Nekropole um die Kirche SS. Felice e Fortunato in Vicetia gewesen zu sein: Mirabella Roberti et al. 1979, 59–67. Aus der Untersuchung von Dresken-Weiland 2003 geht klar hervor, daß die Bestattung eines Verstorbenen in einem Sarkophag – gleich ob verziert oder unverziert – ein Merkmal der gesellschaftlichen Distinktion war, auch wenn viele der Sarkophage nach der Bestattung nicht mehr sichtbar waren (s. Anm. 102). Es ist allerdings die Tendenz festzustellen, daß im Laufe der Zeit (vor allem ab dem 5. Jh.) Grabplatten mit Inschrift die Sarkophage immer stärker zu ersetzen begannen: ebd. 183f.

¹⁰⁷ Mehrfach ist eine Auflassung bzw. Umwidmung der Fora und ihrer Randbebauung im Verlauf des 5. Jhs. durch archäologische Untersuchungen zumindest einigermaßen sicher zu belegen, so in Emona (Plesničar Gec 1997; dies., in: Croce Da Villa/Di Filippo Balestrazzi 2001, 5–18), Iulium Carnicum (Corazzo/Donat/Oriolo 2001), Aquileia (Jäggi 1990, 165–167, 189; Witschel 2004, 150; allerdings wurden nach neuesten Erkenntnissen noch in der ersten Hälfte des 5. Jhs. Restaurierungen an den Portiken des Forums vorgenommen: AN 72, 2001, 488–490); Concordia (Croce Da Villa/Di Filippo Balestrazzi 2001, 139, 166; betroffen war hiervon auch das Theater der Stadt); Verona (Bolla 2000, 39–44; Witschel 2004, 116) und Brixia (Brogiolo 1996; Rossi 2002). Eine gewisse Ausnahme scheint hier nur Opitergium zu bilden, dessen Forum offenbar bis in das 6. oder sogar 7. Jh. in Benutzung war (Castagna/Tirelli 1995; Tirelli 1995, 228).

¹⁰⁸ Vgl. die Analyse von Jäggi 1990 zu Aquileia. Ähnliches läßt sich in den istrischen Städten beobachten; allerdings kam es auch dort nur an zwei Orten zu einer direkten Überlagerung der Forumsrandbebauung durch größere Kirchen: In Nesactium (wo Teile der öffentlichen Thermen überdeckt wurden: Rosada 1999, 91–99) und in Tergeste, wo ein Tempel(?)-Komplex mit großem Eingangstor neben dem Forum in den Neubau der Kathedrale integriert wurde: Verzár-Bass 1999, 175–194; Cuscito 2000, 439–442.

veränderte. Bedeuteten diese beiden wichtigen Entwicklungen der Zeit nach 400 – drastischer Wandel des Stadtbildes und der Inschriftenkultur – nun aber einen völligen Bruch mit den althergebrachten Traditionen und somit den endgültigen „decline of the Roman city“?

Auf den ersten Blick liegt ein solcher Schluß tatsächlich nahe, und die deutliche Zäsur im *epigraphic habit*, die sich in der Zeit um 400 festmachen läßt, scheint jedenfalls nicht dagegen zu sprechen. Man sollte aber m.E. trotz dieser unbestreitbar einschneidenden Veränderungen die immer noch vorhandenen Kontinuitätslinien nicht ganz aus dem Auge verlieren: So zeigen die Mosaik-Stifterinschriften mit klassischen *votum*-Formeln¹⁰⁹ und einer Heraushebung der eigenen Leistung für die christlichen Gemeinde, kirchliche Bauinschriften wie die des Bischofs Eufasius von Parentium oder des hohen Beamten Opilio in Patavium aus dem 6. Jh. mit ihren rhetorischen Anklängen an pagane Restaurierunginschriften¹¹⁰ sowie die zur Verkündigung des christlichen Glaubens mit entsprechenden Verzierungen ausgestatteten Grabtituli, daß immer noch ein breites städtisches Publikum gesucht und mit Hilfe der Inschriften auf verschiedenen Ebenen angesprochen werden sollte, auch wenn ihr Kontext nun in erster Linie die Kirche und der christliche Friedhof und nicht mehr das Forum oder andere öffentliche Gebäude der Stadt waren.¹¹¹

Ausblick

Die Untersuchung des spätantiken *epigraphic habit* in der Provinz *Venetia et Histria* hat zunächst ergeben, daß sich im Laufe des 3. Jhs. erste einschneidende Veränderungen in der Inschriftenkultur vollzogen, durch die einige zuvor sehr wichtige Inschriftengattungen marginalisiert wurden oder gar gänzlich verschwanden. Deutlich geworden ist auch, daß hiervon insbesondere die sog. *civic inscriptions* betroffen waren. Man könnte aus diesem Befund auf einen tiefgreifenden Verlust an urbaner Mentalität und städtischem Patriotismus insbesondere in den Reihen der Oberschichtangehörigen schließen. Ich habe aber versucht aufzuzeigen, daß eine solche Interpretation höchstens teilweise auf die Realität des spätantiken Städtelebens in Norditalien zutrifft. So kann man weder von einer Verdrängung der alteingessenen lokalen Eliten noch von deren Rückzug aus der Öffentlichkeit ausgehen. Auch die Inschriftenkultur verschwand keineswegs völlig, sondern überlebte zumindest in einigen Sektoren, wenn auch teilweise stark gewandelt und zunehmend in christlichem Gewand. Aber selbst für diese neue Form des *epigraphic habit* lassen sich Verbindungslinien zu traditionellen Formen der Selbstdarstellung im urbanen Kontext aufzeigen. Jedenfalls war das

¹⁰⁹ Dazu Caillet 1993, 445f.; Zettler 2001, 151f.

¹¹⁰ s. Anhang 4 Nr. 66; Anhang 6 Nr. 7 (dazu Cuscito/Galli 1976, 58–66; Cuscito 1977, 259–267); vgl. auch Caillet 1993, 469f. sowie Zettler 2001, 140 zu der Theodorus-Inschrift in Aquileia (Anhang 6 Nr. 21).

¹¹¹ Anders interpretiert wird diese räumliche Verlagerung bei den Inschriftensetzungen von Liebeschuetz 2001, 16–18.

Repräsentationsbedürfnis einer recht vitalen städtischen Gesellschaft und insbesondere ihrer Oberschichten durchaus noch vorhanden – teils über Inschriften, teils auf anderen Wegen. Die eigentliche Zäsur zum Mittelalter war aus dieser Sichtweise erst mit dem fast völligen Verschwinden einer städtischen Inschriftenkultur im 7. Jh. erreicht – ich würde also in der Gesamtsicht auf den spätantiken *epigraphic habit* in Norditalien mit seinen beiden deutlich unterscheidbaren Phasen eher den Wandel als den Niedergang betonen.

Anhang 2: Basen¹¹² für Kaiserstatuen des mittleren/späten 3. und des 4. Jhs. in *Venetia et Histria*

Feut markiert sind die Statuenbasen aus der Zeit nach 284.

Nesactium

- 1) AE 1902, 51 = InscrIt X 1, 672 = Alföldy 1984, 80f. Nr. 15: Gordianus III.; Dat.: 238–244; Stifter: *r. p. Nes.*
 2) InscrIt X 1, 673 = Alföldy 1984, 81 Nr. 16: Philippus Arabs; Dat.: 244–249; Stifter: ?

Pola

- 3) CIL V 29 = InscrIt X 1, 43 = Alföldy 1984, 78f. Nr. 7: Ulpia Severina; Dat.: 270–275; Stifter: *res. pub. Polens.*
 4) CIL V 30 = InscrIt X 1, 44: Maximianus; Dat.: 286–305; Stifter: ?
 5) CIL V 31 = InscrIt X 1, 44 = Alföldy 1984, 79 Nr. 8: Licinius; Dat.: 310–316; Stifter: *res p. Pol.*

Parentium

- 6) CIL V 330 = InscrIt X 2, 7 = Alföldy 1984, 81 Nr. 19: Licinius; Dat.: 310; Stifter: *r. p. Parentinor.*

Tergeste

- 7) CIL V 530 = InscrIt X 4, 26 = Alföldy 1984, 83 Nr. 27: Aemilianus; Dat.: 253; Stifter: *ordo Terg.*
 8) CIL V 529 = InscrIt X 4, 27 = Alföldy 1984, 83f. Nr. 28 = SupplIt 10, 1992, 248f. Nr. 7: Constantinus I.; Dat.: 315–337; Stifter: *r. p. Terg.*

Emona

- 9) ILJug II 1083: Valerianus; Dat.: 253–260; Stifter: ?

Forum Iulii

- 10) CIL V 1762 = Alföldy 1984, 104f. Nr. 111: Gallienus; Dat.: 255/56; Stifter: *[res p]u[b.] For(o)iu[l.]*

Aquileia

- 11) CIL V 8971 = SI 149 = Alföldy 1984, 94 Nr. 73 = IA 445: Philippus Caesar; Dat.: 244–246; Stifter: *Aquileienses*
 12) CIL V 856 = ILS 547 = Alföldy 1984, 94f. Nr. 74 = IA 446: Gallienus; Dat.: 254–268; Stifter: *Licinius Diocletianus v.e.*
 13) CIL V 857 = Alföldy 1984, 95 Nr. 75 = IA 447: Cornelia Salonina; Dat.: 254–268; Stifter: *Licinius Diocletianus v.e.*
 14) CIL V 8205 = SI 1109 = InscrIt X 4, 330:¹¹³ Diocletianus; Dat.: 286; Stifter: *Acilius Clarus [v. c. corrector Ital.]*
 15) CIL V 858 = Alföldy 1984, 95 Nr. 76 = IA 462: ? (eventuell Diocletianus und Maximianus); Dat.: 288 (oder 255?); Stifter: *[Sep]timius Amandus [v.] p. rationa[l]is*

¹¹² Aufgenommen sind auch Tafeln bzw. Platten, die ursprünglich vermutlich zu einem Statuensockel gehörten.

¹¹³ Ob es sich bei dieser im Schloß von Duino, also auf dem Territorium von Aquileia, sekundär vermauerten Marmortafel tatsächlich um den Rest eines Statuenmonumentes handelt, ist allerdings nicht ganz klar.

- 16) AE 1995, 694 = Rieß 2001, 271f. Nr. 2: Constantinus I.; Dat.: 315–337; Stifter: *Septimius Aelianus v. c. et F[il.] Mucianus v. p.*
 17) Rieß 2001, 272–274 Nr. 3: Constantinus I.; Dat.: ev. 324–330; Stifter: ?
 18) CIL V 8269 = AE 1984, 434 = IA 448 = Rieß 2001, 268 Nr. 1: Constantinus I.; Dat.: wohl aus der Spätzeit Constantins; Stifter: ?
 19) AN 72, 2001, 490–492: ev. zunächst Constantinus II., dann Constans; Dat.: ev. 337–340 (Erstaufstellung)¹¹⁴; Stifter: ?
 20) CIL V 859 = SI 70 = IA 449 = Rieß 2001, 282 Nr. 4: Constans(?); Dat.: ev. 340; Stifter: ?
 21) CIL III 4613 = InscrIt X 4, 349 (Ad Pirum; auf dem Territorium von Aquileia): ? (ev. Iulian); Dat.: 4. Jh.; Stifter: ?

Hinzu kommen eventuell noch einige stark fragmentierte Stücke, die sich aufgrund des Formulars oder der Paläographie vermutlich dem 3./4. Jh. zuweisen lassen.¹¹⁵

Ferner zu beachten sind zwei späte Kaiserporträts, die in jüngerer Zeit auf dem Forum gefunden wurden: *Aquileia romana. Vita pubblica e privata*, Venezia 1991, 88 Nr. 2 (Bronzeporträt des mittleren 3. Jhs.; ev. Maximinus Thrax); Lopreato 1982 (Marmorbildnis der constantinischen Zeit).

Opitergium

- 22) CIL V 1967 = Alföldy 1984, 113 Nr. 139: ?; Dat.: wohl 3. Jh.; Stifter: *ordo Opite[rg.]*

Bellunum

- 23) Alföldy 1984, 116 Nr. 149 = SupplIt 4, 1988, 324 Nr. 6 = AE 1990, 405: Cornelia Salonina; Dat.: 254–268; Stifter: *d. d.*
 24) CIL V 82* = Alföldy 1984, 116 Nr. 150 = Coppola 1987 = AE 1987, 434 = SupplIt 4, 1988, 325–327 Nr. 7 = AE 1990, 404: Constantius I. Caesar;¹¹⁶ Dat.: 293–305; Stifter: *d. d.*

Feltria

- 25) CIL V 2068 = Alföldy 1984, 117 Nr. 154: Traianus Decius; Dat.: 250; Stifter: *ordo Feltr.*
 26) Alföldy 1984, 117f. Nr. 155 = SupplIt 5, 1989, 251–253 Nr. 2 = AE 1990, 396: ? (ev. Carinus); Dat.: 3. Jh.; Stifter: *ordo Feltrinorum*

Tarvisium

- 27) CIL V 2111: Cornelia Salonina; Dat.: 254–268; Stifter: ?

Vicetia

- 28) CIL V 3112 = Alföldy 1984, 123 Nr. 177: Gordianus III.; Dat.: 242; Stifter: *res publica ... d. d.*
 29) CIL V 3113 = Alföldy 1984, 123f. Nr. 178: Valens; Dat.: 375–378; Stifter: *civitas Vicetina*

¹¹⁴ Die erste Zeile der Inschrift ist eradiert und danach neu beschrieben worden: *Imp(eratori) Fl(avio) Constanti? ---*. Wenn sich dies tatsächlich auf Constans bezieht, dann könnte die Umwidmung im Jahr 340 vorgenommen worden sein, nachdem Constans seinen Bruder Constantinus II. bei Aquileia besiegt hatte; vgl. hierzu auch Nr. 20.

¹¹⁵ IA 454 (3./4. Jh.); IA 460 (2. Hälfte 3./frühes 4. Jh.); IA 508 (Ende 4. Jh.?) sowie zwei unpublizierte Architrave (einer auf dem Forum von Aquileia gefunden; der andere im Lapidarium von Grado) mit Kaisernennungen(?) wohl des späteren 4./frühen 5. Jhs. Die entsprechenden Hinweise verdanke ich der Freundlichkeit meiner Heidelberger Kollegin Brigitte Ruck, die die Inschriften neu bearbeitet hat.

¹¹⁶ So Coppola 1987, 240, der in Z. 3 *Constantio* liest (bestätigt in SupplIt a.O. 326), während Alföldy a.O. *Constanti* angibt und die Inschrift deswegen in die Jahre 333–337 datiert.

- 30) CIL V 3114 = Alföldy 1984, 124 Nr. 179: Gratianus; Dat.: 375–378; Stifter: *[civitas Vi]cetina*

Patavium

- 31) CIL V 2817 = ILS 614 = Alföldy 1984, 121 Nr. 165: Diocletianus; Dat.: (um) 289; Stifter: *Paetus(?) Honoratus v.[c.] corrector Itali[ae]*
 32) CIL V 2818 = Alföldy 1984, 121 Nr. 166: Maximianus; Dat.: 290/92–305; Stifter: *I(n)steius Tertullus v.[c.] corr. Ven. et Histria[e]*

Verona

- 33) CIL V 3330 = Alföldy 1984, 129 Nr. 200: Ulpia Severina; Dat.: 270–275; Stifter: ?
 34) CIL V 3331 = Alföldy 1984, 129 Nr. 201: Constantinus I.; Dat.: 312–337; Stifter: ?

Tridentum

- 35) CIL V 5030 = Alföldy 1984, 142 Nr. 256: Gallienus(?); Dat.: 253–268(?); Stifter: ?
 36) CIL V 5031 = Alföldy 1984, 142 Nr. 257: ?; Dat.: späteres 3./4. Jh.; Stifter: *[ordo(?)] Triden[tinor]*.
 37) Buchi 2000 = AE 2000, 627 = Mazzoleni 2001, 407f. Nr. 39: ?; Dat.: späteres 3./4. Jh.; Stifter: *ordo Tridentinorum*

Brixia

- 38) CIL V 4869 = InscrIt X 5, 1031: Claudius II.; Dat.: 268–270; Stifter: *Benacenses*
 39) CIL V 4320 = InscrIt X 5, 104: Aurelianus; Dat.: 270; Stifter: *M. Au[relius] Ruffinus(?) p.p.*
 40) CIL V 4319 = ILS 579 = InscrIt X 5, 103: Aurelianus; Dat.: 273/74; Stifter: *ordo Brixia-norum*
 41) AE 1987, 456 = SupplIt 8, 1991, 200–202 Nr. 1: Constantius I. Caesar; Dat.: 293–305; Stifter: *[I]ul. Asclepio[dotus] v.c. et Aur. Her[mo]genianus v.[em.] praeff. prae[t.]*

Hinzu kommen vier lebensgroße, feuervergoldete Bronzeköpfe des mittleren bzw. späteren 3. Jhs., die in einem Gang an der Rückseite des Kapitols von Brixia gefunden wurden, wo sie offenbar in einer Art Depot aufbewahrt worden waren. Ursprünglich dürften sie auf dem Forum der Stadt aufgestellt gewesen sein. Sie können als Kaiserporträts (unbekannter Kaiser?) des mittleren 3. Jhs., Aurelian, Probus) angesprochen werden (vgl. Bergmann 1977, 107–117).

Bergomum

- 42) CIL V 5123: Maximus Caesar; Dat.: 236–238; Stifter: *d. d.*

Anhang 3: Spätantike Meilensteine in *Venetia et Histria*

Insgesamt haben sich in *Venetia et Histria* 89 spätantike Meilensteine erhalten. Bei einigen ist die genaue Datierung unklar, andere wiederum sind mehrfach beschriftet worden. Eine Aufschlüsselung nach einzelnen Zeitabschnitten ergibt folgendes Bild:

- 284–305: 12 Meilensteininschriften
 305–312: 13 Meilensteininschriften
 312–337: 22 Meilensteininschriften
 337–363: 11 Meilensteininschriften

363–375: 20 Meilensteininschriften

375–395: 14 Meilensteininschriften

Anhang 4: Epigraphisch bezeugte Angehörige der spätantiken Oberschichten in *Venetia et Histria*

Aufgeführt sind Angehörige der folgenden Gruppen:

A: Mitglieder der lokalen Elite (*curiales, honorati*, weitere lokal gebundene Oberschichtangehörige)

B: Vertreter der Reichsadministration (*praefecti praetorio* etc.), Statthalter, *officiales*, höherrangige Offiziere (*tribuni* und *praepositi*)

Pola

B:

1) CIL V 304 = ILCV 1930 = InscrIt X 1, 551 (PCBE II Thomas 2): *Thomas tribunus*; Mosaik-Stifterinschrift(?), ursprünglich vermutlich im Baptisterium der Cathedralgruppe; Dat.: vermutlich 5. Jh.¹¹⁷

Parentium

A:

Mosaik-Stifterinschriften in der Eufrasius-Basilica; Dat.: Mitte 6. Jh.¹¹⁸

2) CIL V 365–367 = ILCV 219a–c = InscrIt X 2, 87 = Caillet 1993, 327 Nr. 23 (PLRE II Fausta; PCBE II Fausta 2): *Fausta inlustris fem(ina)*

3) InscrIt X 2, 89 = Caillet 1993, 329 Nr. 25 (PCBE II Iohannes 120): *Iohannes v(ir) c(larissimus)*

Tergeste

A:

4) InscrIt X 4, 44 = Alföldy 1984, 84f. Nr. 31: [-] *Aur(elio) Marco v(iro) p(erfectissimo)*; *M. Nonius Mercusenens v(ir) [e(gregius)]*; Ehreninschrift auf Statuenbasis; Dat.: letztes Viertel 3. Jh.¹¹⁹

Mosaik-Stifterinschriften in der Basilica Via Madonna del Mare (2. Phase); Dat.: früheres 6. Jh.¹²⁰

5) AE 1975, 422e = SupplIt 10, 1992, 270f. Nr. 37 = Caillet 1993, 277 Nr. 5 (PCBE II Apronianus 2): *Apronianus vir inl(ustris)*¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Diese Datierung ergibt sich aus der Baugeschichte der Cathedralgruppe von Pola (dazu Mirabella Roberti 1972, 203–206, 210; Testini/Cantino Wataghin/Pani Ermini 1989, 178f.; Cuscito 2000, 456–458); sie ist allerdings nicht völlig gesichert.

¹¹⁸ Bei der Datierung von Stifterinschriften auf Mosaiken in Kirchen folge ich – falls nicht ausdrücklich etwas anderes vermerkt ist – im wesentlichen den Angaben bei Caillet 1993 (hier: 330f.), ohne diese in jedem Einzelfall zu zitieren.

¹¹⁹ Vgl. SupplIt 10, 1992, 218.

¹²⁰ Vgl. Cuscito 1973; Lettich 1978.

¹²¹ Ob dieser Apronianus mit dem 507/11 belegten Apronianus *vir illustris, comes rerum privatarum* (s. PLRE II Apronianus 2) identisch ist oder ob er ein Mitglied der lokalen Oberschicht war, kann nicht sicher geklärt werden (vgl. Cuscito 1973, 138; Pietri 1982, 120, 135f.; Caillet 1993, 277; dagegen PCBE a.O.). Man hat auch vermutet, daß Apronianus, in dessen Inschrift keine Fußangaben gemacht werden, mehr gestiftet hat als nur einen Teil des Mosaikfußbodens, eventuell sogar die ganze Kirche; dies ist aber eher unwahrscheinlich (s. Lettich 1978, 164f.; SupplIt 10, 1992, 270).

- 6) AE 1975, 422g = SupplIt 10, 1992, 271f. Nr. 38 = Caillet 1993, 278f. Nr. 7 (PCBE II Agnellus 15, Maximus 18): *cum ... Maximo notario et defensore) s(an)c(t)ae Aquil(eiensis) eccl(esiae) et Agnell(o v(iro) c(larissimo)*
 7) AE 1975, 422h = SupplIt 10, 1992, 272f. Nr. 39 = Caillet 1993, 280 Nr. 8 (PCBE II Crysgonus): *cum ... Crysgono defensore) s(an)c(t)ae eccl(esiae) Aquil(eiensis)*
 8) AE 1975, 422i = SupplIt 10, 1992, 273 Nr. 40 = Caillet 1993, 281 Nr. 10 (PCBE II Bonosus 4): *Bonosu[s] defensor) s(an)c(t)ae eccl(esiae) Terg(estinae)*¹²²
 9) (?) AE 1975, 422l = SupplIt 10, 1992, 274f. Nr. 42 = Caillet 1993, 282 Nr. 11 (PCBE II Iohannis 3): *Ioh[an]n[is] --- s(an)c(t)ae eccl(esiae) T[ergestinae]?*¹²³
 10) (?) AE 1975, 422n = SupplIt 10, 1992, 273f. Nr. 41 = Caillet 1993, 283 Nr. 14: *[Ca]n[stius] ---] s(an)c(t)[ae] [eccl(esiae) Terg(estinae)?]*

11) CIL V 694 = InscrIt X 4, 293: *Maurentius v(ir) i(llu)stris*; christliche Grabinschrift; Dat.: 571

s. auch Anhang 5d Nr. 1 für einen Spielstifter des frühen 4. Jhs., der vermutlich der Oberschicht von Tergeste angehörte.

B:

12) CIL V 374 = InscrIt X 3, 53: *Fl(avio) Ursicino cent(enario) stabuli d(om)inici*; Grabinschrift aus Novigrad (Territorium von Tergeste); Dat.: 4. Jh.¹²⁴

13) AE 1975, 422o = SupplIt 10, 1992, 277 Nr. 46 = Caillet 1993, 284 Nr. 15 (PCBE II Barsaina): *Barsaina pr(im)icerius) pe(n)sorum*; Mosaik-Stifterinschriften in der Basilica Via Madonna del Mare (2. Phase); Dat.: früheres 6. Jh. (s.o.)

Iulium Carnicum

A:

Bauinschriften auf Felswänden am Passo di Monte Croce Carnico (Territorium von Iulium Carnicum):

14) CIL V 1863 = ILS 5886 = CLE 891 = AE 1992, 728 = AE 1997, 580; vgl. Bandelli 1992, 174–184, 191–193; Mainardis 1994: *non placuit cur(i)ae et Attio Braetiano q(uaestore) eorum viro ornat*; Dat.: wohl spätes 3./frühes 4. Jh.

15) CIL V 1862 = ILS 5885 = AE 1992, 729 = AE 1997, 580; vgl. Bandelli 1992, 183, 187–189; Canali de Rossi 1999: *curante Apinio Programmatio* [Canali de Rossi: *curante Apinio proc<u>ran[te] Matio] cur(atore) r(ei) p(ublicae) Iul(iensium) Kar(norum)*]; Dat.: 373

Glemona

A:

16) (?) SupplIt 12, 1994, 119f. Nr. 9 = AE 1994, 679: *Getacius Vincentius vir clarissimus et Turrana Iusta clarissima femina*; Grabinschrift auf Sarkophag aus San Daniele del Friuli (Territorium von Glemona); Dat.: (spätes?) 3. Jh.¹²⁵

¹²² Zum Amt des *defensor ecclesiae* – ein Laie aus der städtischen Oberschicht (in diesem Falle von Aquileia bzw. Tergeste), der dem Bischof in weltlichen Angelegenheiten zur Seite stand – vgl. Zovatto 1966; Caillet 1993, 279. Die Inschriften Nr. 6 und 7 nahmen auf dem Kirchenboden einen herausgehobenen Platz ein.

¹²³ Bei diesem und dem nachfolgenden Mann könnte es sich auch um Kleriker handeln.

¹²⁴ Vgl. SupplIt 10, 1992, 196.

¹²⁵ Zur Datierung (nach der Typologie des Sarkophages und der Paläographie) in das (mittlere) 3. Jh. s. SupplIt 12, 1994, 120; Alföldy 1999c, 289; dazu jedoch auch Noviello 1996, 171 Anm. 11: „datazione forse troppo alta“ (gerade im Vergleich mit dem am selben Ort gefundenen Sarkophag SupplIt 12, 1994, 145f. Nr. 51 = AE 1994, 695, der – wohl zu Recht – in die erste Hälfte des 4. Jhs. datiert wird). Nach Noviello a.O. könnten beide Stücke, die wieder verwendet in der Kirche von S. Daniele gefunden wurden, ursprünglich aus Iulia Concordia

AquileiaA:

17) (?) CIL V 785 = ILS 7592 = IA 249: *Aurelius Cassianus ... decurio col(oniae) For(i) Iulii Irens(ium)*; Weihinschrift an IOM; Dat.: eventuell spätes 3. Jh.

18) s. Anhang 2 Nr. 16: *Septimius Aelianus v(ir) c(larissimus) et F[il(avius)] Mucianus v(ir) p(erfectissimus) p(rae)p(ositi) operis*; Kaiserinschrift auf Statuenbasis aus den Großen Thermien; Dat.: 315–337

19) CIL V 1658 = ILCV 284 = IA 2908: *Flavio Victorino v(iro) perfectissimo comiti*; ¹²⁶ christlicher Grabstein aus der Nekropole Beligna; Dat.: Mitte 4. Jh.

20) (?) CIL V 882 = IA 509: Grabstein für einen Senator und Konsul?; Dat.: wohl 4. Jh.

21) CIL V 1678 = ILCV 2168 = IA 3114: *Leontia ... felia(!) Valentiniani clarissimi*; christliche Grabinschrift aus dem Bereich der Kirche SS. Felice e Fortunato; ¹²⁷ Dat.: nach dem Kontext wohl (früheres) 5. Jh.

22) (?) CIL V 1721 = IA 2915: über den Verstorbenen wird gesagt *hic ducen[ria] dignitate inter lectos meruerat viros*; christliche(?) Grabinschrift aus der Kirche SS. Felice e Fortunato; Dat.: nach dem Kontext eventuell (früheres) 5. Jh.

23) (?) CIL V 1712 = ILCV 4725 = IA 3233: christliche(?) Grabinschrift ¹²⁸ eines reichen Mannes namens *Valentinianus* auf Sarkophag (Rep. II 99f. Nr. 289) aus der Kirche SS. Felice e Fortunato; Dat.: spätantik(?) ¹²⁹

24) ILCV 1910 (PCBE II Ioannis 1, Laurentius 5): *Laurentius v(ir) spectabilis, Ioannis v(ir) spectabilis*; christliche Weihinschrift auf einer Silberpyxis, gef. unter dem Hauptaltar von S. Eufemia in Grado; ¹³⁰ Dat.: Ende 5. Jh.(?)

Mosaik-Stifterinschriften in der Basilica S. Eufemia in Grado (Territorium von Aquileia); Dat.: (kurz vor) 579 ¹³¹

25) AE 1975, 416f = Caillet 1993, 245 Nr. 35 (PCBE II Dominus 4): *Domninus v(ir) c(larissimus)*

26) (?) CIL V 1595 = ILCV 1311 = Caillet 1993, 229 Nr. 9 = IA 3346 (PCBE II Lautus 2): *Lautus actuarius(!) s(an)c(t)ae eccl(esiae) Aquil(eiensis)* ¹³²

Anzufügen sind vielleicht noch die zahlreichen *notarii* auf Mosaik-Stifterinschriften in derselben Kirche (insgesamt 9 Inschriften mit 6/7 Stiftern sowie ein weiterer Titulus in San Canzian d'Isonzo), falls es sich bei diesen tatsächlich um städtische Angestellte und nicht um solche der Kirche handelte. ¹³³

stammen. Die Getacii sind ansonsten nur in Tergeste belegt (s. CIL V 603 = InscrIt X 4, 120), die Turranii hingegen gerade in Concordia, und zwar sowohl in der Kaiserzeit wie in der Spätantike, mit einer möglichen Verbindung zu der bedeutenden stadtrömischen Familie der Anicii (IRIC 183/84; ISTC 75; vgl. Pietri 1982, 111f.).

¹²⁶ Vgl. Pietri 1982, 118.

¹²⁷ Vgl. Mirabella Roberti 1993.

¹²⁸ Für eine christliche Grabinschrift weist der Titulus aber ein reichlich ungewöhnliches, auf das diesseitige Leben bezogenes Formular auf; vgl. die Diskussion bei Carlini 1980 (s. auch die folgende Anm.).

¹²⁹ Nach Jäggi 1990, 180 handelt es sich hierbei hingegen um einen im 4./5. Jh. nachträglich 'christianisierten' Sarkophag der Kaiserzeit. Ebenso Rep. II a.O.: Ein wiederverwendeter paganer Sarkophag der Zeit um 250–280, der nach 400 durch die Anbringung eines Christogrammes umgewidmet wurde.

¹³⁰ Vgl. Buechhausen 1971, 246–249 B 18/19.

¹³¹ Zur Datierung vgl. Caillet 1993, 227, 257; s. aber auch PCBE II p. 962.

¹³² Nach Caillet 1993, 229 handelte es sich bei Lautus vermutlich um einen Laien, der – etwa als Verwalter des kirchlichen Besitzes – im Dienst der lokalen *ecclesia* stand.

¹³³ So jedenfalls Caillet 1993, 223.

Hinzu kommen folgende Mosaik-Stifterinschriften, die zwar keine Rangbezeichnungen oder sonstige Angaben zur sozialen Stellung der Dedikanten enthalten, bei denen aber die Größe der gestifteten Flächen auf eine Zugehörigkeit zur Oberschicht verweist.¹³⁴

27) AE 1975, 420 = Caillet 1993, 196 Nr. 2 = IA 3391 (PCBE II Paulinus 16, Marcellina 2); *Paulinus et Marcellina* stiften 1500(?)¹³⁵ *pedes* in der Basilica Piazza della Corte (1. Phase) in Grado; Dat.: Anfang 5. Jh.

28) AE 1975, 411w = Caillet 1993, 183f. Nr. 33 (PCBE II Victor 9, Theosebes): *Victor et Theosebes* stiften 1200 *pedes* in der Basilica di Monastero (1. Phase); Dat.: Anfang 5. Jh.¹³⁶

29) Caillet 1993, 186 Nr. 37 (PCBE II Probus 8, Severa 3): *Probus et Severa* stiften 1000 *pedes* in derselben Kirche; Dat.: Anfang 5. Jh.

B:

30) s. Anhang 2 Nr. 14 (PLRE I Clarus 2): *Acilius Clarus* [v(ir) c(larissimus) corrector I]ta-l(iae); Stifter einer Statue(?) des Diocletian; Dat.: 286

31) s. Anhang 2 Nr. 15 (PLRE I Amandus 3): [Sep]timius Amandus [v(ir)] p(erfectissimus) rationa[l]is; Stifter einer Kaiserstatue; Dat.: 288 (oder 255?)

32) s. Anhang 5b Nr. 1–3 (PLRE I Theodolus): *Sept(imus) Theodulus* v(ir) c(larissimus) correc(tor); ließ drei Statuen auf das Forum von Aquileia umsetzen; Dat.: um 360

33) s. Anhang 5b Nr. 7 (PLRE I Bassus 9): [cur(ante) Val]erio Adelfio Basso v(iro) c(larissimo) consu[l(ari) Ven(etiae) et Histr(iae)]; Bauaufsicht bei städtischem(?) Bauprojekt; Dat.: 383–392

34) CIL V 1582 = ILCV 82 = IA 2905 (PLRE I Apollinaris 5; PCBE II Apollinaris 1): *Parecorius Apoll[inaris] consul(aris) Venet(iae) et H[istr]iae* v(ir) c(larissimus) fecit; christliche Bau/Stifterinschrift¹³⁷ auf Tafel; Dat.: um 390/400¹³⁸

35) s. Anhang 5b Nr. 8 (PLRE I Hilarianus 3): [--- Hi]larian[us ---] / [prae]fectus pr[ae]torio --; initiierte(?) städtisches Bauprojekt; Dat.: spätes 4. oder früheres 5. Jh.

36) (?) CIL V 1555 = IA 502: [--- Ur]bicus pr[ae]fectus ---; Bauinschrift(?); Dat.: spätrömisch(?)

37) SI 193 = ILCV 423 = AE 1972, 192 = IA 2912: [Flaviu]s Farius qui [et Vita]lis trib(unus) Min(erviorum); christliche Grabinschrift auf Tafel; Dat.: 4. Jh.

38) CIL V 1646 = ILCV 446 = IA 3023: *Dizones pr(a)epositi*; christliche Grabinschrift auf Tafel; Dat.: 4./5. Jh.

39) CIL V 1652 = ILCV 439 = IA 2911: *Fl(avius) Aparenta ... ex tribunis*; christliche Grabinschrift auf Tafel; Dat.: 4./5. Jh.

40) CIL V 1680 = ILCV 357 = IA 2910 (PLRE II Macrobius 4): *Machrobio eugnacho(?) palatino centenario*; *Fl(avius) Firminus vir ducen(arius)*; christliche Grabinschrift auf Tafel; Dat.: 5. Jh.(?)

41) Caillet 1993, 216f. (ohne Nr.) = IA 3361 (PCBE II Sesi[---]): *Sesi[ntus] cubico[la]rius(?)*,¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Vgl. Pietri 1982, 134.

¹³⁵ Vgl. Mazzoleni 1994, 203.

¹³⁶ Dies ist die traditionelle Datierung der ersten Bauphase der Basilica di Monastero. Andere Forscher vertreten hingegen einen späteren chronologischen Ansatz um die Mitte des 5. Jhs., ohne daß sich diese Frage sicher entscheiden ließe; dazu Mazzoleni 1994, 197f.

¹³⁷ Das Objekt der Stiftung ist leider nicht genau auszumachen, da der obere Teil der Inschrift beschädigt ist. Auf jeden Fall handelte es sich um ein Bauwerk zu Ehren der Apostel: [--- basilicam? et] / +++++ in honor[em] / sanctorum Apostol[or(um)]. Fraglich ist auch die Identifizierung des genannten Baues mit der sog. Basilica del Fondo Tullio alla Beligna; vgl. Brusin 1964 und Cantino Wataghin 1989, bes. 84 mit Anm. 36.

¹³⁸ s. Degrassi 1960.

¹³⁹ Bei den beiden in Grado belegten *cubicularii* dürfte es sich um Hofbeamte und nicht um Angehörige der kirchlichen Verwaltung gehandelt haben; so wohl zu Recht Cavallaro 1972; Caillet 1993, 217; Mazzoleni 1994, 201f.

Mosaik-Stifterinschrift im Baptisterium in Grado (Territorium von Aquileia); Dat.: wohl um 500¹⁴⁰

Mosaik-Stifterinschriften in der Basilica S. Eufemia in Grado (Territorium von Aquileia); Dat.: (kurz vor) 579:

42) CIL V 1592 = ILCV 121 = Caillet 1993, 228 Nr. 8 = IA 3343 (PLRE III Laurentius 7; PCBE II Laurentius 49): *Laurentius v(ir) c(larissimus) palatinus*

43) AE 1975, 416j = Caillet 1993, 247 Nr. 39 = IA 3373 (PCBE II [---]nus): *[Firmi?]nus [cubicu]lari[us]*

Julia Concordia

A:

44) (?) AE 1981, 402 = IRIC 38; vgl. Alföldy 1999, 117 Nr. 5: *[Seve]rino [--- d]uumvir[o]*; Grabinschrift(?); Dat.: eventuell spätes 3. Jh.¹⁴¹

Grabinschriften auf Sarkophagen der zweiten Belegungsphase der *Necropoli di Levante*; Dat.: bald nach Mitte 4. Jh. bis etwa Mitte 5. Jh.:¹⁴²

45) ILCV 4851 = AE 1976, 247 = ISTC 17: *Cham v(ir) c(larissimus) com(es)*¹⁴³

46) CIL V 8770 = ILCV 370 = ISTC 10: *Numeriani pryncipalis(!) de civitate Murse(n)se*

47) CLE 621 = ILCV 822 = ISTC 8: *Fl(avius) Maximinus ... cuius fama super (a)ethera notus dignitate et honore perfunctus*¹⁴⁴

48) AE 1951, 91 = ISTC 98 (PCBE II Faustianiana): *Faustianiana c(larissima) femina*, christliche Grabinschrift auf einem Sarkophag (Rep. II 91 Nr. 257) in einem Annexraum (Grabkapelle)¹⁴⁵ des christlichen Komplexes; Dat.: frühes 5. Jh.(?)¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Zur Datierung vgl. Mazzoleni 1994, 201; es ist auch eine spätere Ansetzung im 6. Jh. möglich.

¹⁴¹ s. IRIC p. 109.

¹⁴² Vgl. ISTC p. 29–31 (gegen die These von Hoffmann 1969, 83–107, der zumindest die Grabinschriften der Soldaten sämtlich in einen kurzen Zeitraum gegen Ende des 4. Jhs., nämlich 394/95, datieren möchte). Die chronologische Obergrenze (s. auch ISTC p. 15), die mit dem Überfall der Hunnen im Jahre 452 (s. Paul. Diac. HR XIV 11 zur angeblichen Zerstörung von Concordia) gleichgesetzt wird, scheint mir aber keineswegs so sicher bestimmbar zu sein (s. dazu auch Anm. 146).

¹⁴³ Bei diesem Mann ist nicht klar, ob es sich um einen höheren Offizier (so – wenn auch vorsichtig – Hoffmann 1969, 63) oder einen zivilen *honoratus* handelt (vgl. die Diskussion in ISTC p. 59f.; allgemein Scharf 1994), wobei ich letzteres für wahrscheinlicher halte.

¹⁴⁴ Zur wahrscheinlichen Einordnung dieses Mannes unter die *curiales* vgl. ISTC p. 52.

¹⁴⁵ Vgl. Dresken-Weiland 2003, 147f.

¹⁴⁶ So ISTC p. 134f. (ähnlich Rep. II a.O.: 1. Hälfte 5. Jh.); möglich ist aber wohl auch eine spätere Datierung in das späte 5. oder frühe 6. Jh. Ein Problem bilden dabei die beiden anderen möglichen Erwähnungen derselben(?) Faustianiana: Zum einen in einer fragmentarischen Stifterinschrift auf dem Mosaikboden der großen Basilica, der in seiner in der ersten Phase in das frühe 5. Jh. datiert wird (s. Caillet 1993, 120f. Nr. 7, der aber die Ergänzung offenläßt); zum anderen in der Inschrift einer *[Fausti?]niana* auf einem kleinen Säulenkapitell ebenfalls aus dem Bereich der Basilica (Caillet 1993, 121; dazu Mazzoleni 1987, 86). Gegen die daran anknüpfende Datierung des Sarkophages der Faustianiana in das frühe 5. Jh. wendet sich Cantino Wataghin 1992, 342f. Ihrer Meinung nach ist der Umbau des Raumes hinter der Trichora in das *sacellum* der Faustianiana nicht vor dem frühen 6. Jh. erfolgt. Übernommen wird diese Datierung von La Rocca 2001, 292f. Eine solch späte Ansetzung könnte immerhin erklären, warum auf dem Sarkophag eine recht ausführliche Inschrift angebracht wurde, während die meisten anderen

B:

49) Croce da Villa 2002, 181: *[Fl(avio?) ND[---] p(rae)p(osito) ex n[um(ero)] scutario[r(um)]]*; Grabinschrift auf Stele; Dat.: frühes 4. Jh.

50) CIL V 8697, 8721 = ILCV 538a = ISTC 1 und CIL V 8662 = ILCV 538b = ISTC 2: *Fl(avius) Romulianus p(rae)p(ositus) fab(ricae) sagitt(ariae)* bzw. *ex p(rae)p(osito)*; Grabinschriften auf Sarkophagen der ersten Belegungsphase der *Necropoli di Levante*; Dat.: 1. Hälfte 4. Jh.¹⁴⁷

51) CIL V 1880 = ISTC 103: *Fl(avio) Victori ducenar(ia) princeps(!) stabuli dominici*; christliche Grabinschrift; Dat.: 1. Hälfte 4. Jh.¹⁴⁸

52) CIL V 8771 = ILS 1962 = ILCV 509 = ISTC 11: *Saturninus centenar(ius) ex officio p[rae]fecti Illir(ici) Dac(iae) rip(ensis)*; Grabinschrift auf Sarkophag; Dat.: 4. Jh.

53) s. Anhang 5a Nr. 6 (PLRE I Mamertinus 2, Praenestius); *disponente Claud[i]o Mamertino v(iro) c(larissimo) per Italiam et Inlyricum praefecto praetorio curante Vetulenio Praenestio v(iro) p(erfectissimo) corr(ectore) Venet(iae) et His(triae)*; Aufsicht bei kaiserlichem Bauprojekt; Dat.: 362/63

Grabinschriften auf Sarkophagen der zweiten Belegungsphase der *Necropoli di Levante*; Dat.: bald nach Mitte 4. Jh. bis etwa Mitte 5. Jh. (s.o.):

54) AE 1891, 103 = ILCV 395 = ISTC 56: *Fl(avio) Martidio p(rae)p(osito) auxilliariorum mil(l)i(iariensium) e<q=O>uif(tum)*

55) CIL V 8753 = ILCV 441 = ISTC 50: *Fl(avius) Marcaridus tribunus militum Iovioru(m) iuniorum*

56) ILCV 436 = ISTC 18: *Sirramnis tribunus*

Bellunum**A:**

57) CIL V 2046 = AE 1990, 401 (s. SupplIt 4, 1988, 315); *Iuventius Titus v(ir) p(erfectissimus)*; Grabinschrift auf Sarkophag; Dat.: früheres 4. Jh.¹⁴⁹ (s. auch Anhang 5d Nr. 2)

Feltria**A:**

58) AE 1908, 107(B) = ILS 9420 = Alföldy 1984, 117f. Nr. 155 = SupplIt 5, 1989, 253–255 Nr. 3: *at(!) memoriam Hos(tili) Flaminini*, offenbar ein Mitglied der lokalen Oberschicht; erwähnt werden auch *IIIvir(i) et sex princ(ipales?) et officiales pub(lici)*;¹⁵⁰ (Ehren?)Inschrift auf (wiederverwendeter) Statuenbasis; Dat.: 323 (s. auch Anhang 5d Nr. 3)

Vicetia**A:**

59) Mirabella Roberti et al. 1979, 43–45 = Caillet 1993, 90 Nr. 4 (PCBE II Felix 18, Toribius, Immola): *Felix v(ir) c(larissimus), Toribius et Immola cc(larissimae) ff(eminae)*; Mosaik-Stifterinschrift in der Kirche SS. Felice e Fortunato; Dat.: um 400

60) AE 1909, 50: *B(a)ebius Eusebius ex princ(i)p(alis?)*;¹⁵¹ christliche Grabinschrift auf Sarko-

Begräbnisse im Umkreis der Basilica anepigraphisch blieben (s. Anm. 16). Es ist tatsächlich nicht einzusehen, warum alle christlichen Grabinschriften Concordias schon vor der Mitte des 5. Jhs. entstanden sein sollen, zumal die Basilica im mittleren 6. Jh. offenbar noch einmal recht aufwendig restauriert wurde (Croce Da Villa/Di Filippo Balestrazzi 2001, 140. 256. 260f. 302).

¹⁴⁷ s. ISTC p. 46f.

¹⁴⁸ s. ISTC p. 154.

¹⁴⁹ Vgl. Buchi 1995, 92.

¹⁵⁰ Zur Erklärung vgl. Buchi 1995, 92f., der in den *officiales publici* städtische Sklaven sieht.

¹⁵¹ Die Auflösung ist nicht ganz sicher; sie könnte auch *ex princ(i)p(alibus)* lauten. Ebenso

phag (Rep. II 95 Nr. 272) aus der Nekropole um SS. Felice e Fortunato; Dat.: Ende 4./Anfang 5. Jh.

61) AE 1909, 51 = ILCV 254 = AE 1980, 504: *Salonius Mauricus*¹⁵² *vir laudavilis(!) ex comete(!)*; christliche(?) Grabinschrift auf Sarkophag aus der Nekropole um SS. Felice e Fortunato; Dat.: Ende 4./Anfang 5. Jh.

B:

62) Mirabella Roberti et al. 1979, 90 (PCBE II Gregorius 14): *Gregorius sublimis vir referendarius; christliche Bau/Stifterinschrift (hoc oratorium b(eatae) M(ariae) ... a fundamentis aedificavit et ... dicavit)* auf dem Architrav einer Pergola in dem Kultraum (Oratorio di S. Maria Mater Domini) neben der Kirche SS. Felice e Fortunato; Dat.: wohl frühes 6. Jh.¹⁵³

63) IG XIV 2314: *stratuomenos despotikos pinkernes*; christliche Grabinschrift auf Stele; Dat.: wohl mittleres/spätes 6. Jh.¹⁵⁴

Patavium

B:

64) s. Anhang 2 Nr. 31 (PLRE I Honoratus 11): *Paetus(?) Honoratus v(ir) c(larissimus)) corrector Italiae*; Stifter einer Statue des Diocletian; Dat.: (um) 289

65) s. Anhang 2 Nr. 32 (PLRE I Tertullus 6): *(Attius) I(n)steius Tertullus v(ir) c(larissimus)) corr(ector) Ven(etiae) ei Histriae*; Stifter einer Statue des Maximian; Dat.: 290/92–305

66) CIL V 3100 = ILS 1297 = ILCV 1803 = AE 1991, 807 (PLRE II Opilio 5; PCBE II Opilio 4; vgl. Billanovich 1991): *Opilio v(ir) c(larissimus) et inl(ustris) p(raefectus) p(raetorio) adq(ue) patricius; christliche Bau/Stifterinschrift (hanc basilicam vel oratorium in honore s(an)c(t)ae Iustinae martyris a fundamentis coeptam ... perfecit)* auf einem Tympanon in dem Kultraum (Sacello di S. Prosdocimo) neben der Kirche S. Giustina. Opilio ist vermutlich identisch mit dem anonymen *conditor* einer weiteren Inschrift auf dem Architrav einer Pergola in demselben Raum¹⁵⁵ (Zovatto 1958, 137–158): *In nomine Dei in hoc loco conlocatae sunt reliquiae s(an)cto-rum apostolorum et plurimorum martyrum qui pro conditore omnique fidelium plebe orare dignentur*. Dat.: früheres 6. Jh., eventuell zwischen 529 und 533¹⁵⁶

ist nicht klar, ob es sich um einen ehemaligen Angehörigen der *principales* innerhalb der lokalen *curia* oder um einen Militär handelte; vgl. die Diskussion bei Cracco Ruggini 1987a, 280 mit Anm. 313.

¹⁵² Dieser ist eventuell identisch mit dem Stifter eines Mosaikes in SS. Felice e Fortunato (Caillet 1993, 91 Nr. 5: *Mauricus et Macriana cum suis*), obwohl hier keine Rangbezeichnung angegeben ist; vgl. Pietri 1982, 119, 134; Cracco Ruggini 1987a, 298; dagegen jedoch Caillet a.O.

¹⁵³ So Deichmann 1953; vgl. auch Zovatto 1958, 144 Anm. 9: Ende 5./Anfang 6. Jh; ferner Cracco Ruggini 1987a, 299f. mit Anm. 375.

¹⁵⁴ Zur Lesung, Datierung und Erklärung der Inschrift vgl. Forlati Tamaro 1982, 429–432. *Pinkernes* entspricht dem klassischen *epikernes* bzw. dem lateinischen *pincerna*. Es handelt sich also um einen kaiserlichen Hof-Bediensteten, der dem Herrscher den Trinkbecher reichte.

¹⁵⁵ s. Pietri 1982, 136. Zum Kontext der beiden Inschriften, die sich möglicherweise nicht *in situ* befinden, sondern ursprünglich zu einem weiteren, von Opilio errichteten *sacellum* gehörten, vgl. Billanovich 1991, 93f. Während Opilio diesen Kultraum, die in der Inschrift erwähnte *basilica*, wohl weitgehend neu (*a fundamentis*) errichtete, brachte er in der benachbarten Hauptkirche, dem *oratorium*, vermutlich lediglich schon seit längerer Zeit andauernde Restaurierungs- bzw. Umbauarbeiten an dem Gebäude, das eventuell einen Vorgängerbau – eine Apostelkirche – aus dem späteren 4. Jh. besaß, zu Ende; so jedenfalls Billanovich 1991, 75–85.

¹⁵⁶ So Billanovich 1991, 71–75, die den Stifter in Patavium mit Opilio, CSL 527/28 (PLRE II Opilio 4), identifiziert; nach PLRE und PCBE hingegen gibt der Konsulat des Venantius Opilio im Jahre 524, der in der Inschrift nicht erwähnt wird, für diese einen *terminus ante quem*.

Mantua**A:**

67) (?) CIL V 4084 = ILCV 673: *Thomas v(ir) h(onestus) negotiator p(a)en(i)t(entialis?)*; christliche Grabinschrift; Dat.: 540

68) (?) CIL V 4057 = ILS 8230 (PLRE I Amazonicus): *Cl(audius) Amazoni[c]us v(ir) e(gregius) maritus Marciae Aurel(iae) Alexandriae c(larissimae) m(emoriae) f(eminae)*; Grabinschrift, eventuell jedoch aus Rom stammend;¹⁵⁷ Dat.: wohl spätes 3. Jh.

s. auch u. Anhang 5d Nr. 4 zu dem Stifter eines Bades, der wohl aus der Oberschicht der Stadt stammte.

Verona**A:**

69) CIL V 3345 = AE 1980, 502 = Alföldy 1984, 129f. Nr. 203; vgl. Alföldy 1999b: *[A]ur(ellus)(?) Vin[ce]ntius ... v(ir) c(larissimus) et Tenagenonia Claudia c(larissima) f(eminae)*; **Ehreninschrift** (für eine Frau der Oberschicht) auf **Statuenbasis**;¹⁵⁸ Dat.: spätes 3. bis spätes 4. Jh.

70) Caillet 1993, 79f. Nr. 8 (PCBE II Rufinus 8): *Rufinus v(ir) c(larissimus)*; Mosaik-Stifterinschrift aus der Kathedrale (2. Phase); Dat.: wohl Mitte 5. Jh.

71) CIL V 3897 = ILCV 223: *Placidia inlustris puella*; christliche Grabinschrift; Dat.: 532

B:

72) CIL V 3344 = ILS 1266 = Alföldy 1984, 131 Nr. 211 (PLRE I Probus 5): *Petronio Probo v(iro) c(larissimo) totius admirationis viro ... cons(uli) ordinario ... patrono*;¹⁵⁹ **Ehreninschrift** auf **Statuenbasis**(?); Dat.: 371 oder bald danach

73) s. Anhang 5b Nr. 4 (PLRE I Palladius 19): *Val(erius) Palladius v(ir) c(larissimus) cons(ularis) Venet(iae) et Hist(riae)*; ließ Statuenumsetzung auf dem Forum von Verona durchführen; Dat.: 379–383

Tridentum**A:**

74) SupplIt 6, 1990, 176 Nr. 38 = AE 1990, 426 = Mazzoleni 2001, 389 Nr. 3: *v(ir) s(pectabilis) Censorius*; christliche Grabinschrift aus der Basilica unter dem Dom S. Vigilio; Dat.: wohl 6. Jh.; ev. 539, 554 oder 569

Brixia**A:**

75) (?) CIL V 4478 = InscrIt X 5, 267 = AE 1996, 726: *C(aius) Sillenus C(ai) f(ilius) Serenianus Anniensis omnibus honorib(us) municipalibus perfunct(us)*;¹⁶⁰ Grabinschrift auf Sarkophag; Dat.: spätest(?) 3. Jh.¹⁶¹

76) (?) CIL V 4331 = InscrIt X 5, 118: *Domitiae Victorinae c(larissimae) f(eminae) Aurelianus vir clarissimus*; Grabinschrift; Dat.: spätes 3./frühes 4. Jh.(?)¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ s. CIL V p. 1078; Alföldy 1999c, 307.

¹⁵⁸ Die Statue war aber wohl nicht öffentlich, etwa auf dem Forum aufgestellt, sondern in einem Grabbezirk oder in einem Haus; s. Alföldy 1999b, 199.

¹⁵⁹ Die Familie des Probus stammte wohl aus Verona (s. auch CIL VI 1751 = ILS 1265); vgl. PLRE a.O.; Pietri 1982, 112–116 und Alföldy 1999b, 207 mit Anm. 42.

¹⁶⁰ Diese Ämter hat Serenianus wohl nicht in Brixia ausgeübt, sondern der Tribus-Angabe nach in Cremona; Gregori 1999, 208; anders Breuer 1996, 174 B98.

¹⁶¹ Stella 1996 setzt die Inschrift nach einer stilistischen Analyse des Sarkophages an das Ende des 3. Jhs. Dies wird auch von Gregori 1999, 153, 330 übernommen. M.E. ist die Inschrift wegen der Tribus-Nennung aber eher etwas früher zu datieren.

¹⁶² Vgl. Breuer 1996, 147f. B44/45 (3. Jh.); Alföldy 1999c, 314 (wohl 3. Jh.); sowie den Kommentar von Gregori 1999, 121 zu diesen Personen: „vissuti forse ancora nel corso dello

77) (?) CIL V 4870 = InscrIt X 5, 1032 (PLRE I Dubitatus 1–2, Fortunatus 4): *M(arco) Aur(elio) Dubitato v(iro) c(larissimo) ... C(aio) Centullio Fortunato adulescenti clarissimo ... M(arcus) Aur(elius) Dubitatus v(ir) c(larissimus)*; Grabinschrift aus Toscolano Maderno (Territorium von Brixia); Dat.: spätes 3./frühes 4. Jh.¹⁶³

B:

78) s. Anhang 2 Nr. 41 (PLRE I Asclepiodotus 3): *[I]ul(ius) Asclepio[dotus] v(ir) c(larissimus) et Aur(elius) Her[mo]genianus v(ir) [em(inentissimus)] praef(ecti) prae(t)orio*]; Stifter einer Statue des Constantius I. Caesar; Dat.: 293–305

79) s. Anhang 5b Nr. 5/6 (PLRE I Gaudentius 8): *Cor(nelius) Gauden(tius) v(ir) p(erfectissimus) com(es) et corr(ector) Ven(etiae) et Hist(riae)*; ließ Statuen auf das Forum von Brixia versetzen; Dat.: um 340/50

80) CIL V 4370 = InscrIt X 5, 159: *Fl(avio) Luppio ex praep(osito)*; christliche(?) Grabinschrift; Dat.: 4./5. Jh.

81) Garzetti/Valvo 1999, 50–53 Nr. 12 = AE 1999, 735: *Exuperio ex p(rae)p(osito)*; Grabinschrift; Dat.: 4./5. Jh.

s. auch u. Anhang 5d Nr. 5 zu einem Ehepaar, das vermutlich der Oberschicht der Stadt angehörte.

Bergomum

A:

82) (?) CIL V 5189 = ILCV 3169B: *Ioannes (v)i<r>(?) c(larissimus?)*¹⁶⁴ christliche Grabinschrift; Dat.: 570/71

Anhang 5: Epigraphische Belege für profane Bauaktivitäten und Euergetismus im spätantiken *Venetia et Histria*

a) kaiserliche Bautätigkeit

Iulium Carnicum

1) s. Anhang 4 Nr. 15: *Munificentia ddd(ominorum) Auggg(ustorum)que nnn(ostrorum) hoc iter ... apertum est*; Bauinschrift auf Felsen am Plöckenpaß (Territorium von Iulium Carnicum); lokale Bauaufsicht durch einen (oder zwei?) städtischen Beamten; Dat.: 373

Aquileia

2) (?) CIL V 7992 = ILS 5860 = IA 2894a: *[---] viam Anniam ... inter plurima indulgentiar(um) suar(um) in Aquileiens(es) providentissim(us) princeps restituit*; Bauinschrift auf Tafel aus dem Territorium von Aquileia; Dat.: ev. unter Maxentius¹⁶⁵

3) (?) CIL V 7992a = IA 2894b: selber Text wie Nr. 2

4) s. Anhang 2 Nr. 16: *[Restitutori operum publicorum] d(omino) n(ostro) Fl(avio) Constantino*; Statuenbasis mit Inschrift für Kaiser Constantinus I.; erwähnt wird darin der Umbau der *[f]elicitum thermarum [Co]nstantiniarum*¹⁶⁶ lokale Bauaufsicht durch Mitglieder der städtischen Oberschicht (s. Anhang 4 Nr. 18); Dat.: 315–337

stesso III sec. (se non già nel IV sec.)“ und insbesondere ebd. 304 mit Anm. 8: Eher 4. als 3. Jh. (so auch Gregori 2002, 514 mit Anm. 12).

¹⁶³ Vgl. Breuer 1996, 148 B46/47 (3. Jh.); Alföldy 1999c, 314 (3. Jh.); Gregori 1999, 304, 320 (zwischen 3. und 4. Jh.).

¹⁶⁴ Die Lesung der verlorenen Inschrift ist an dieser Stelle unklar: Überliefert ist *IIC*, was Diehl zu der oben angeführten Verbesserung führte. Andere wollten hingegen *ep(is)c(opus)* verstehen, was jedoch unwahrscheinlich ist; vgl. SupplIt 16, 1998, 335.

¹⁶⁵ Vgl. Witschel 2002, 346–348.

¹⁶⁶ Zur Bezeichnung eines Gebäudes mit dem Namen des Kaisers vgl. Horster 2001, 102–

5) s. Anhang 2 Nr. 17: *[ob(?) therm]as indulgentia eius¹⁶⁷ vetusta]e conla[hsas restitutas(?)]*; Statuenbasis(?) mit Inschrift für Kaiser Constantinus I.; Dat.: ev. 324–330

s. auch CIL V 803 = ILS 624 = IAq 354; CIL V 732 = ILS 625 = IAq 127: Weiheinschriften der Kaiser Diocletianus und Maximianus an Sol und Apollo Belenus¹⁶⁸

Julia Concordia

6) CIL V 8658 = 8987 = ILS 755 = AE 1995, 583; vgl. Kolb 1995: *d(ominus) n(oster) Iulianus invictissimus princeps ... cursum fiscalem brevialis mutationum spatii fieri iussit*; Bauinschrift auf Tafel; lokale Bauausführung und -aufsicht liegen beim PPO (*disponente*) und beim Statthalter (*curante*); s. Anhang 4 Nr. 53; Dat.: 362/63¹⁶⁹

b) Bau- und sonstige Aktivitäten, die von Statthaltern/hohen Staatsbeamten initiiert bzw. kontrolliert wurden

Statuenumsetzungen durch Statthalter:

Aquileia

1) IAq 501: *Sept(imius) Theodulus v(ir) c(larissimus) [cor]rec(tor) ornavit*; wiederverwendete Basis für eine Götterstatue(?); Dat.: um 360¹⁷⁰ vom Forum

2) AE 1996, 686a–b; vgl. Zaccaria 2000: selber Text wie Nr. 1; wiederverwendete Basis für eine Statue des Hercules¹⁷¹ vom Forum

3) AE 1999, 697; vgl. Zaccaria 2001: selber Text wie Nr. 1; wiederverwendete Basis für eine Statue der *Concordia Aquileiensium et Concordiensium*¹⁷² vom Forum

111. Aus ihrer Diskussion geht hervor, daß eine (vollständige) Finanzierung von so benannten Bauwerken durch den Kaiser selbst keineswegs immer angenommen werden kann. Im vorliegenden Falle dürfte eine solche aufgrund des Kontextes dennoch wahrscheinlich sein; so auch Rieß 2001, 272.

¹⁶⁷ Zur kaiserlichen *indulgentia* in Bauinschriften vgl. Horster 2001, 73–75; auch hier ist eine Finanzierung der erwähnten Baumaßnahme durch den Kaiser nicht automatisch anzunehmen, jedoch einigermaßen wahrscheinlich: Rieß 2001, 273f. 279f.

¹⁶⁸ Vgl. Horster 2001, 39 Anm. 103.

¹⁶⁹ s. Kolb 1995, 191.

¹⁷⁰ Zur Datierung s. Cecconi 1998, 177 (der vorsichtig bleibt); Zaccaria 2000, 100; dens., 2001, 490.

¹⁷¹ *Herculi* steht in kleineren Buchstaben oberhalb der eigentlichen Inschrift auf der Randleiste der Basis und gehörte offenbar zu einer früheren Inschrift, deren Hauptteil abgearbeitet worden war, um den Titulus des Theodulus anzubringen. Wegen dieser Stellung handelt es sich eventuell nicht um einen Götternamen, sondern um das Signum eines Mannes aus der Oberschicht, der im 2./3. Jh. mit einem Standbild (oder einem Grabmonument?) geehrt worden war (so Zaccaria 2000, 97; ders. 2001, 486–488). Den Dübelspuren auf der Basisoberseite zufolge wurde aber bei der Neuaufstellung im 4. Jh. hier tatsächlich eine Statue des Hercules befestigt. Eventuell hatte man bewußt eine frühere Basis mit Ehreninschrift ausgesucht, weil hier der Name des Hercules, wenn auch in ganz anderem Zusammenhang, auftauchte.

¹⁷² Wiederverwendet wurde hier wohl tatsächlich ein Standbild der Concordia. Die frühere Inschrift auf der Basis wurde dabei nicht eradiert, sondern der neue Titulus in den weiten Zwischenräumen zwischen den Zeilen des älteren angebracht. Unklar bleibt allerdings, ob letzterer noch sichtbar war oder bei der Neuaufstellung im mittleren 4. Jh. mit Stuck überdeckt wurde (so Zaccaria 2001, 485f.).

Verona

4) CIL V 3332 = ILS 5363 = Alföldy 1984, 129 Nr. 202; vgl. Lizzi 1988: *statuam in Capitolio diu iacentem in cereberrimo(!) fori loco constitui iussit Val(erius) Palladius v(ir) c(larissimus) cons(ularis) Venet(iae) et Hist(riae)*; Basis für eine Götterstatue(?) vom Forum;¹⁷³ Dat.: 379–383

Brixia

5) CIL V 4327 = InscrIt X 5, 114: *Cornelius Gaudentius v(ir) p(erfectissimus) com(es) et cor(ector) Ven(etiae) et Hist(riae) curavit*; vermutlich wiederverwendete Basis(?)¹⁷⁴ für eine Götterstatue(?);¹⁷⁵ Dat.: um 340/50¹⁷⁶

6) CIL V 4328 = InscrIt X 5, 115: selber Text wie Nr. 5; vermutlich wiederverwendete Basis für eine Götterstatue(?) vom Forum

Hinzu kommen die von Statthaltern oder hohen Reichsbeamten aufgestellten **Kaiserstatuen** (s. Anhang 2; insgesamt 5).

Weitere durch Statthalter initiierte/kontrollierte munizipale Bauaktivitäten:

s. Anhang 5a Nr. 6 (Iulia Concordia) zu *cura* des Statthalters beim Ausbau der Infrastruktur für den *cursus publicus*.

Aquileia¹⁷⁷

7) AE 1934, 236 = IA 450: [--- *cur(ante)(?) Val(erio) Adelfio Basso v(iro) c(larissimo) cons(ul)(ari) Ven(etiae) et Hist(riae)*]; Bauinschrift auf Architrav; Dat.: 383–392

8) SI 178 = IA 451 (PLRE I Hilarianus 3; II Hilarianus 1): [*Hil(larianus) --- prae]fectus praetorio ---] muros ac t(urres) ---]*; Bauinschrift auf Tafel; Dat.: spätes 4. oder früheres 5. Jh.

c) Bauaktivitäten der lokalen BehördenIulium Carnicum

1) s. Anhang 4 Nr. 14: Zustand des Paßweges *non placuit curiae* und dem lokalen *quaestor*; Bau/Weiheinschrift auf Felsen am Plöckenpaß (Territorium von Iulium Carnicum); erinnert an Durchführung der Arbeiten an einer *via nov(a)* unter Leitung des *servus publicus*(?) Hermias;¹⁷⁸ Dat.: spätes 3./frühes 4. Jh.

d) (Nicht-christlicher) Euergetismus der lokalen OberschichtenTergeste

1) CIL V 563 = ILS 5123 = InscrIt X 4, 77 = AE 1991, 758; vgl. Gregori 1989; dens. 1991: Erwähnt wird ein *Constantius munerarius*, der in Tergeste Gladiatorenspiele veranstaltet hatte; Grabinschrift (für zwei Gladiatoren); Dat.: wohl frühes 4. Jh.

¹⁷³ s. Pietri 1982, 123.

¹⁷⁴ Vgl. Gregori 2002, 513f.

¹⁷⁵ Breuer 1996, 151 B54 vermutet hinter dem *curavit* hingegen eine Baumaßnahme.

¹⁷⁶ s. Cecconi 1994, 29f.

¹⁷⁷ Vgl. auch die eventuell spätrömische Inschrift Anhang 4 Nr. 36, bei der es sich um einen *Baudulus* handeln könnte und in der ein *prae]fectus ---]* erscheint.

¹⁷⁸ Vgl. Mairandis 1994, 48.

Bellunum

2) s. Anhang 4 Nr. 57: ein Mitglied der lokalen Oberschicht *dedit coll(egia) fab(rorum) ad mem(oria)m col(endam) rusarum et vindemia(rum) l(denarium) foll(es) quingentos*; Grabinschrift auf Sarkophag; Dat.: früheres 4. Jh.

Feltria

3) s. Anhang 4 Nr. 58: *acceperunt coll(egia) fab(rorum) et cc(entonariorum) l(denariorum) quingentamilia*, um von den Zinsen jährlich das Andenken eines Mannes der lokalen Oberschicht zu feiern; Inschrift auf Statuenbasis; Dat.: 323

Mantua

4) AE 1972, 202: *Valentius B[ae]bianus Iunior balneum a solo fecit*; Bauinschrift auf Tafel aus Asola (Territorium von Mantua); Dat.: 336

Brixia

5) AE 1959, 258 = InscrIt X 5, 1075: Sarkophag mit Grabinschrift des *Ravius Mallucianus* und der *Fl(avia) Fausta* aus Riva del Garda (Territorium von Brixia), verbunden mit einer testamentarischen Stiftung an die *sodales Pacatienses* zur Feier der *sollemnia*; Dat.: spätes 3./4. Jh.¹⁷⁹

Anhang 6: Epigraphisch bezeugte Bischöfe und Angehörige des Klerus in Venetia et Histria¹⁸⁰

Pola¹⁸¹

1) AE 1987, 419 = Cailliet 1993, 339 Nr. 4 (PCBE II Dalmatius 4): *Dalmatius presbiter(!)*; Mosaik-Stifterinschrift in der Kirche St. Andreas in Betika (Territorium von Pola);¹⁸² Dat.: 2. Viertel 5. Jh.

¹⁷⁹ Vgl. Gregori 1999, 267f.

¹⁸⁰ Nicht eigens aufgeführt sind die Fälle, in denen in posthumen (Grab)Inschriften eines – historischen oder fiktiven – Bischofs oder Klerikers gedacht wurde, der später eine Verehrung als Lokalheiliger erfuhr. Dies gilt zum einen für Parentium, wo in InscrIt X 2, 64 = AE 1997, 572 (vermutlich Teil eines Sarkophages; gefunden in der Eufrasius-Basilika; Dat.: unklar, wohl 5. Jh.; s. hierzu auch InscrIt X 2, 187) *Maurus ... episcopus et confessor* erwähnt wird (s. PCBE II Maurus 1; vgl. Cuscito/Galli 1976, 52–55; Rendić-Miočević 1978; Picard 1988, 652–654). Zwei vergleichbare Stücke stammen aus der Kirche S. Giustina (bzw. dem angrenzenden Oratorium) in Patavium: Zum einen die Frontseite eines Sarkophages (Rep. II 90 Nr. 256) mit Bildnis des Heiligen und Inschrift *S(an)c(tu)s Prosdoci(mus) ep(i)s(copus) et confess(or)*; Dat.: 1. Hälfte 6. Jh. (Zovatto 1958, 159–167; Picard 1988, 641–644). Wohl ebenfalls noch in das 6. Jh. gehörig und nicht mittelalterlich ist die Grabinschrift des Lokalheiligen *Daniel te(v)i(t)a* (AE 1953, 36; PCBE II Daniel; vgl. Forlati Tamaro 1981, 295; Billanovich 1991, 87f. bes. Anm. 78 zur Lesung und Datierung). Eine solche christliche Denkmalkultur der Spätantike läßt sich auch bei der Märtyrerverehrung beobachten, so in San Canzian d'Isonzo bei Aquileia, wo in Inschriften des 4. Jhs.(?) an die Märtyrer Protus und Chrysogonus erinnert wurde (vgl. Bertacchi et al. 1991); und in Vicetia. Dort ist auf einer Inschrift (ILCV 2002 = AE 1983, 435), deren Datierung allerdings sehr umstritten ist (vgl. die divergierenden Ansätze bei Cracco Ruggini 1987a, 291f. 295; mittleres 4. Jh.; sowie bei Forlati Tamaro 1982, 423–429; 6./7. Jh.), zu lesen: *Baeat(i) martures Felix et Fortunatus*.

¹⁸¹ Vgl. ferner AE 1999, 745, die Grabinschrift eines [...]*Jerius episcopus eccl(esiae) Po(l)lensis* (s. PCBE II [...]*Jerius*), die heute in S. Apollinare in Classe in Ravenna aufbewahrt wird; Dat.: 2. Hälfte 6./7. Jh.

¹⁸² Vgl. Marušić/Šašel 1986.

2) InscrIt X 1, 710: *Transitus [---] diaconus*; **christliche Bauinschrift(?)** auf einem kreuzförmigen Pfeiler in der Kathedrale; Dat.: 6. Jh.

s. auch das Monogramm des Bischofs Antonius (PCBE II Antonius 7; Dat.: Anfang 6. Jh.) auf einem Kapitell in der Kirche der Hl. Felicitas im *suburbium* der Stadt, das vermutlich im Zuge einer Restaurierungsmaßnahme in der im 5. Jh. errichteten Kirche angebracht wurde (B. Marušić, *Histria Archaeologica* 11–12, 1980/81, 51)

Parentium

Mosaik-Stifterinschriften in der ‚Prae-Eufasiana‘; Dat.: 1. Hälfte 5. Jh.¹⁸³

3) InscrIt X 2, 68 = Caillet 1993, 313 Nr. 11 (PCBE I Ianuarius 17, Theofrastus): *Theofrastus Ianuarius diac(oni)*

4) InscrIt X 2, 69 = Caillet 1993, 314 Nr. 12 (PCBE II Bassinus): *Bassinus diaconus*

5) InscrIt X 2, 70 = Caillet 1993, 315 Nr. 13: [---] *lect(or)*

6) InscrIt X 2, 71 = Caillet 1993, 315 Nr. 14 (PCBE II Innocentius 12): *Innocentius diaconus*

Bau/Stifterinschriften in der Eufasius-Basilica; Dat.: Mitte 6. Jh. (teilweise auch etwas später):

7) InscrIt X 2, 81 (PCBE II Eufasius): *sacerdos(!) Eufasius*; **christliche Bauinschrift** (*fundamenta locans erexit culmina templi*) auf dem Mosaik in der Apsis der Basilica; s. auch die Monogramme des Eufasius auf Säulenkapitellen und in *opus sectile* in der Apsis: InscrIt X 2, 90
8) ILCV 1854 = InscrIt X 2, 92: *Eufasius antis(tes)*; **christliche Bauinschrift** (*a fondamen(tis)(!)* ... *hunc loc(um) cond(idit)*) auf einem Reliquiar

9) InscrIt X 2, 91 (PCBE II Stephanus 11): *Stefan(us) c(ustos?) ec(clesiae)*; christliche Stifterinschrift auf einer Säule

10) InscrIt X 2, 88 = Caillet 1993, 329 Nr. 24 (PCBE II Dominicus 9): *[D]ominicus archidiaconu[s]*; Mosaik-Stifterinschrift

11) (?) InscrIt X 2, 93; s. auch ebd. 94, wohl zugehörig¹⁸⁴ (PCBE II Theodorus 26): *Theodorus*; Inschrift auf einem Architekturteil, eventuell zu einem Bischofsstuhl gehörig

12) InscrIt X 2, 185 = Caillet 1993, 333f. Nr. 3 (PCBE II Eraclius 2): *Eraclifus] <l>ec(tor)*;¹⁸⁵ Mosaik-Stifterinschrift in einem frühchristlichen Gebäude unter dem Istituto Magistrale; Dat.: 2. Hälfte 6. Jh.(?)

Tergeste

Mosaik-Stifterinschriften in der Basilica Via Madonna del Mare (2. Phase); Dat.: früheres 6. Jh. (s.o.):

13) AE 1975, 422f = SupplIt 10, 1992, 275 Nr. 43 = Caillet 1993, 277f. Nr. 6 (PCBE II Constantinos): *Constantinos pr(es)b(yp)ter*

14) AE 1975, 422j = SupplIt 10, 1992, 276 Nr. 45 = Caillet 1993, 280 Nr. 9 (PCBE II Augustinus 2): *Augu[s]tinu[s] diac(on)us*

15) AE 1975, 422p = SupplIt 10, 1992, 275 Nr. 44 = Caillet 1993, 284f. Nr. 16 (PCBE II Ianuarius 18): *Ianuarius pr(es)b(yp)ter s(an)c(t)ae ecc<l>(esiae) Terg(estinae)*

16) (?) CIL V 695 = ILCV 1864 = InscrIt X 4, 294 = AE 1973, 261 = Caillet 1993, 286 Nr. 18 (PCBE II Rufinus 9): *Rufinus custos ... fieri curavit pavimentum*

¹⁸³ So Caillet 1993, 324 (m.E. wäre aber auch eine Datierung in das mittlere 5. Jh. möglich). Neue Forschungen haben ergeben, daß es sich bei der ‚Prae-Eufasiana‘ um eine Doppelkirchen-Anlage handelte: Matejčić/Chevalier 1998.

¹⁸⁴ Vgl. Cuscito/Galli 1976, 55f.

¹⁸⁵ So Caillet 1993, 334; Degrazi in InscrIt a.O. las *tec(tor)*.

17) InscrIt X 4, 295 = Caillet 1993, 292 (PCBE II Frugifer): *Frugiferus*; **christliche Bauinschrift(?)** auf einem Mosaikboden in der Basilica unter der heutigen Kathedrale S. Giusto (s. auch Monogramm des Frugiferus auf Kapitellen in dieser Kirche: InscrIt X 4, 296f.); Dat.: zwischen 542 und 565

18) CIL V 474 = ILCV 1805 = InscrIt X 3, 168 (PCBE II Ursus 14): *[U]rsus p(res)b(ite)r ... Frugifero ep(iscop)o*; **christliche Bauinschrift** (*hanc cel[?]ola(m) ... o[r]navit?*) aus Rozzo (Territorium von Tergeste); Dat.: zwischen 542 und 565

Emona

19) AE 1982, 377 = AE 1985, 717 = Caillet 1993, 372 Nr. 1 (PCBE II Antiochus): *[---] archidiacono Antiocho*; **christliche Bauinschrift** (*battisterium(?) et porticus ... perfectum est*) auf einem Mosaikboden in dem frühchristlichen Baukomplex;¹⁸⁶ Dat.: frühes 5. Jh.

Iulium Carnicum

20) CIL V 1858 = ILCV 1060 (PCBE II Ianuarius 13): *Ienuarius(?) h[uius] / s(an)c(tae) ec(c)l(esiae) pr(a)esu[?]*; **christliche Grabinschrift**; Dat.: 490

Aquileia

21) ILCV 1863 = AE 1986, 243 = Caillet 1993, 137 Nr. 4 (s. auch ebd. 129 Nr. 1; PCBE II Theodorus 1): *Theodore felix*; **christliche Bauinschrift** (*omnia baeate(?) fecisti et gloriose dedicasti*) auf dem Mosaikboden des Kathedraalkomplexes (I. Phase); Dat.: 313–319¹⁸⁷

22) CIL V 1623 = ILCV 1061 = IA 2904 (PCBE II Amantius 3, Ambrosius 3): *sacerdos ... proprium cui nomen Amanti; Ambrosius diac(onus)*;¹⁸⁸ **christliche Grabinschrift** aus der Basilica alla Beligna; Dat.: 423

Mosaik-Stifterinschriften in der Basilica von San Canzian d'Isonzo (Territorium von Aquileia);¹⁸⁹ Dat.: um 500:

23) Caillet 1993, 259f. Nr. 1 (PCBE II Honorius 1): *Hon[or]ius dia[conus]*

24) Caillet 1993, 261 Nr. 4 (PCBE II Domn[...]): *Domn[us?] lector*

25) CIL V p. 149 = Caillet 1993, 226 Nr. 7. = IA 3331; AE 1975, 417 = Caillet 1993, 231 Nr. 11 = IA 3338; AE 1921, 67 = AE 1975, 416m/s. = Caillet 1993, 248 Nr. 42 = IA 3365 (PCBE II Helias): *praesulis Haellae ... beati; Helias ep(iscopu)s Aquil(e)nsis; Helias ep(i)s(copus) s(an)c(t)ae Aquil(e)nsis eccl(esiae)*; **christliche Bauinschriften** (*Haellae studio praestante; fundator eccl(esiae) s(an)c(t)ae Eufemiae votum solvit; fec(it)*) auf dem Mosaikboden in der Basilica S. Eufemia in Grado (Territorium von Aquileia); Dat.: (kurz vor) 579

Mosaik-Stifterinschriften in derselben Kirche:

26) CIL V 1583 = ILCV 1884 = Caillet 1993, 223f. Nr. 4 = IA 3332 (PCBE II Amara 2): *Amara lec(tor)*

27) CIL V 1594 = Caillet 1993, 225 Nr. 6 = IA 3345; AE 1975, 416o = Caillet 1993, 249 Nr. 44 = IA 3370 (PCBE II Laurentius 48): *Laurentius diaconus*

¹⁸⁶ Zu dem Baukomplex vgl. Plesničar Gec 1983.

¹⁸⁷ Das ist die traditionelle Datierung der frühesten Kirchenanlage in Aquileia, die von Caillet 1993, 140f. nochmals bekräftigt wird. Es gibt aber nicht unberechtigte Zweifel daran, ob die Inschrift des Bischofs Theodorus wirklich zum originalen Baubestand gehörte oder nicht doch nachträglich in den Mosaikfußboden eingesetzt wurde (dagegen aber Zeitler 2001, 136–138), womöglich zu dem Zeitpunkt, als ein bereits bestehendes Gebäude (mit Mosaikdekor) in eine Kirche umgewandelt wurde (im mittleren 4. Jh.). Vgl. hierzu die Überlegungen von Ristow 1994.

¹⁸⁸ Vgl. zu dieser Inschrift zuletzt die (nicht immer überzeugenden) Ausführungen von Dissaderi 1998.

¹⁸⁹ Vgl. Bertacchi et al. 1991, 10–24.

- 28) CIL V 1599 = ILCV 1871 = Caillet 1993, 234 Nr. 15 = IA 3348 (PCBE II Murgio): *Murgio lector*
 29) CIL V 1611 = ILCV 1886 = Caillet 1993, 241 Nr. 29 = IA 3357 (PCBE II Victorinus 8): *Victorinus lect(or)*
 30) CIL V 1589 = ILCV 1870 = Caillet 1993, 241f. Nr. 30 = IA 3342 (PCBE II Iohannes 57): *Iohannis lect(or)*
 31) AE 1975, 416n = Caillet 1993, 249 Nr. 43 = IA 3371 (PCBE II Lautus 1): *Lautus lector*
 32) CIL V 1587 = ILCV 1210 = Caillet 1993, 253 Nr. 53 = IA 3337 (PCBE II Gazeus): *Gazeus diaconus*
 33) CIL V 1605 = ILCV 1885 = Caillet 1993, 254 Nr. 55 = IA 3335 (PCBE II Seco[laris?]): *Seco[laris?] lecto[r]*
 34) AE 1938, 135 = AE 1975, 416h = IA 3364 (PCBE II Marcianus 10): *Marcianus episc(opus)*; christliche Grabinschrift auf Mosaikboden in derselben Kirche; Dat.: Ende 6. Jh.

Julia Concordia

- 35) CIL V 8708 = SI 401 = AE 1996, 702 (PCBE II Valentinus 3): [---] *Valentino ... exorc(istae?)*; ¹⁹⁰ christliche Grabinschrift auf Tafel; Dat.: Ende 4./Anfang 5. Jh.
 36) AE 1976, 241 = ISTC 99 (PCBE II Maurentius 1): *sancius Maurentius presbiter(!)*; christliche Grabinschrift auf Sarkophag (Rep. II 91f. Nr. 258); ¹⁹¹ Dat.: 1. Hälfte 5. Jh. ¹⁹²
 37) (?) CIL V 2305 = ILCV 3822 = AE 1986, 249 (PCBE II Saturninus 2): *Aur(elius) Saturninus diac(onus)*; christliche Grabinschrift auf Sarkophag; in Venedig; später in Vigonovo aufbewahrt, aber eventuell aus Concordia stammend; ¹⁹³ Dat.: 4./5. Jh.

Cremona

- 38) CIL V 4118/19 = ILCV 1278 (PCBE II Stephanus 29): *Stephanus v(ir) r(eligiosus?) lic-tur(!)*; christliche Grabinschrift; Dat.: 537

Verona ¹⁹⁴

- 39) CIL V 3895 = ILCV 1872 = Caillet 1993, 75 Nr. 4 (PCBE II Marinus 1): *Marin[us a]col-l(ithus)*; Mosaik-Stifterinschrift in der Kathedrale (1. Phase); Dat.: wohl 3. Viertel 4. Jh.
 40) CIL V 3896 = ILCV 1037 (PCBE II Valens 2): *Valens ep(iscopu)s*; christliche Grabinschrift; Dat.: 531

Tridentum

- 41) Dal Ri/Rossi 1987, 220f. Nr. 3: *Maurus dia[conus]*; christliche Grabinschrift auf Sarkophag (Rep. II 96 Nr. 277) aus Mezzocorona (Territorium von Tridentum); Dat.: 400–550

¹⁹⁰ Vgl. Noviello 1996.

¹⁹¹ Dieser Sarkophag wies eine architektonische Rahmung auf, von der sich Säulenbasen erhalten haben; vgl. Dresken-Weiland 2003, 148f.

¹⁹² So ISTC p. 138f.; es wäre aber auch eine etwas spätere Ansetzung möglich.

¹⁹³ So Noviello 1996, 166. 171 Anm. 11. Vgl. aber die ausführliche Diskussion des Stückes durch Cusolito 1984b: Danach könnte der Sarkophag eventuell doch in Vigonovo selbst (d.h. auf dem Territorium von Patavium) gefunden worden sein, wo in der Lokalität Sarmazza an der via Anna eine offenbar nicht unbedeutende und noch in der Spätantike bestehende Siedlung existiert haben dürfte, wie der Fund einer weiteren christlichen Grabinschrift zu belegen scheint (s. AE 1995, 598 mit dem Kommentar von Nicoletti 1995; aber auch hier verbleibt eine gewisse Unsicherheit, ob der Stein nicht ursprünglich aus Aquileia stammte; vgl. Forlati Tamaro 1981, 290f.).

¹⁹⁴ Nicht auffindbar war für mich die Grabinschrift des *Iohannes presbyter*, die aus Besagno bei Rovereto stammen soll (erwähnt bei Bonfanti Pol/Dal Ri 1986, 63).

Christliche Grabinschriften aus der Basilica unter S. Vigilio; Dat.: (späteres) 5./6. Jh.¹⁹⁵

42) Mazzoleni 2001, 388 Nr. 2: *Agustia[nus?] presb(y)t(er)*

43) Mazzoleni 2001, 393 Nr. 6: *Metroni(us?) pr(e)s(byter) ... custus(l) basilic(a)e huius*

44) Mazzoleni 2001, 395 Nr. 7: *Patern[us] diaconus*

45) Mazzoleni 2001, 396 Nr. 10: *[Va?]lentina [fil(ia)? P]ersic(i)? ep(i)s(copi)*

46) Mazzoleni 2001, 398 Nr. 13: *[---] pres[byter]*

47) Mazzoleni 2001, 398 Nr. 14: *[---] pr[esbyter?]*

48) AE 1977, 282 = SupplIt 6, 1990, 173 Nr. 36 = Cailliet 1993, 68 Nr. 1 (PCBE II Eugypius, Laurentius 61): *tempor(e) do[mi]ni Eugyp(i) ep(i)s(copi) Laurentius cant(or)*; christliche Bauinschrift(?)/Mosaik-Stifterinschrift (*c[on]struxit?*); das gesamte Gebäude(?) in der Nord-Kirche auf dem Doss Trento; Dat.: 2. Viertel/Mitte 6. Jh.¹⁹⁶

Brixia

49) CIL V 4846 = ILCV 1038 = InscrIt X 5, 723 (PCBE II Latinus 1, Macrinus 1): *Fl(avio) Latino episcopo ... et Fla(vio) Macrino lectori*; christliche Grabinschrift;¹⁹⁷ Dat.: 1. Hälfte 4. Jh.¹⁹⁸

50) CIL V 4847 = ILCV 1279 = InscrIt X 5, 724 (PCBE II Proculus 1): *Attio Proculo lectori*; christliche Grabinschrift; Dat.: 4. Jh.(?)

51) CIL V 4187 = InscrIt X 5, 903 (PCBE II Augustinus 1): *Iulius Augustinus subdiac(onus)*; christliche Grabinschrift aus Lenò (Territorium von Brixia); Dat.: 4. Jh.¹⁹⁹

52) InscrIt X 5, 715 = Cailliet 1993, 63 Nr. 4 (PCBE II Syrus 3): *Syrus diac(onus)*; Mosaik-Stifterinschrift (*h(unc) l(ocum) t(essellavit)*) in der Südkirche des Kathedralkomplexes; Dat.: wohl Ende 4./1. Hälfte 5. Jh.

53) CIL V 4844 = ILCV 1156 = InscrIt X 5, 721 (PCBE II Arminius): *Arminu(s) [---]V() pr(es)b(yte)r*; christliche Grabinschrift; Dat.: 571

54) InscrIt X 5, 731: ... *archidiaconus*; christliche Grabinschrift; Dat.: 6. Jh.(?)

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¹⁹⁵ Zur Datierung der Steine, die leider relativ ungenau bleiben muß, vgl. Mazzoleni 2001, 385.

¹⁹⁶ Die Datierung hängt an der chronologischen Einordnung des Episkopats des Eugypius, die nur ungefähr vorgenommen werden kann; vgl. hierzu Cailliet 1993, 69f.; Mazzoleni 1993, 164f.; Rogger 2000, 496f.; PCBE II a.O.

¹⁹⁷ Vgl. Picard 1988, 222f.

¹⁹⁸ Zur Datierung vgl. PCBE II p. 1231; Gregori 2002, 517.

¹⁹⁹ s. Gregori 2002, 520.

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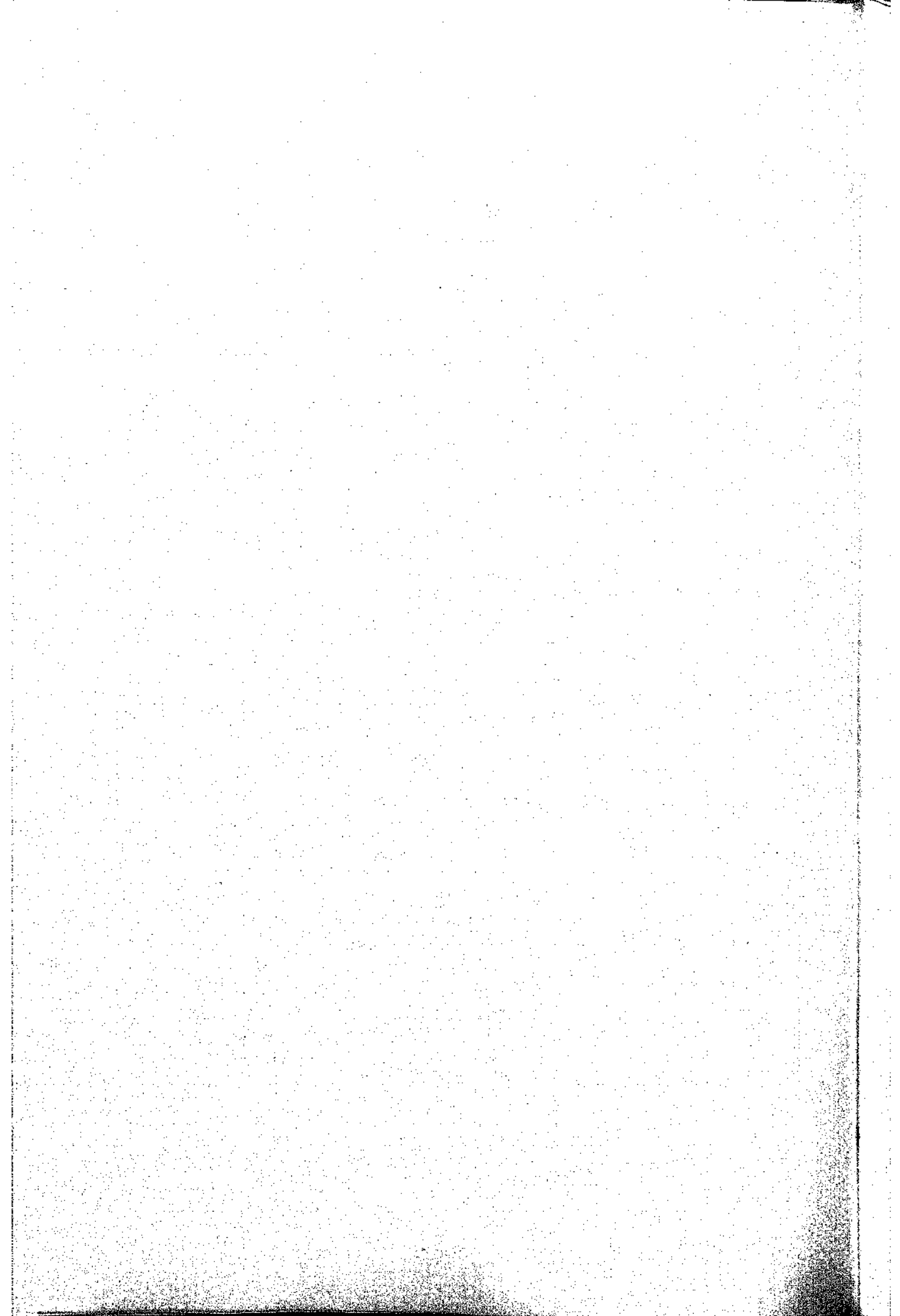
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Überlegungen zur Sozialgeschichte des Klerus im 5./6. Jh. n. Chr.

JENS-UWE KRAUSE (München)

Einleitung: Die Kleriker als neue Führungsschicht?

Wenn danach gefragt wird, was als das Spezifikum der spätantiken Gesellschaft gelten kann, so fällt die Antwort nicht schwer: Es ist zunächst und vor allem die Etablierung des Christentums als staatlich anerkannte und geförderte Religion durch Konstantin. Durch vielfältige Privilegierung, die Schaffung eines eigenen Gerichtsstandes für Kleriker, die Befreiung von den mit dem Curialenstand verbundenen *munera*, im begrenzten Umfang auch Steuerprivilegien, wurde ein eigener Klerikerstand, ein *ordo*, überhaupt erst geschaffen. Damit stellte sich die Frage nach der gesellschaftlichen Rolle der Kleriker im Vergleich zur vorkonstantinischen Zeit in grundlegender Weise neu.

Der Gesetzgeber scheint die Absicht gehabt zu haben, nicht nur den Bischof, sondern den Klerus in seiner Gesamtheit in das sich im 5. und 6. Jh. konstituierende städtische Honorationsregime einzubinden. Nach einem Gesetz des Honorius aus dem Jahr 409 sollte der *defensor civitatis* von den städtischen *honorati*, den *possessores* und *curiales*, darüber hinaus aber auch vom Bischof und den Klerikern bestimmt werden. Hundert Jahre später wurden diese Bestimmungen im Osten des Reiches von Anastasius erneuert.¹ Der *defensor civitatis* war im 5. Jh. zum wichtigsten Amtsträger in der städtischen Hierarchie geworden; wenn nun auch den Klerikern, d.h. den Presbytern, den Diakonen und dem niederen Klerus, bei dessen Bestellung eine wichtige Rolle zufiel, so müssen wir uns fragen, wie weit die Einflußmöglichkeiten des christlichen Klerus in der „späten spätantiken Stadt“ (nach Liebeschuetz) des 5./6.Jh. denn tatsächlich reichten.

Was in der Sekundärliteratur zur sozialen und ökonomischen Lage des spätantiken Klerus zu lesen ist, läßt sich in wenigen Sätzen zusammenfassen: Die christlichen Kleriker bildeten hiernach im Gegensatz zu den heidnischen Priestern ein „Berufspriestertum“. Sie widmeten ihre Zeit voll und ganz der Kirche. Mit wachsendem Wohlstand der Kirche erhielten die Bischöfe und Kleriker zum Teil Saläre, die deutlich über dem lagen, was Staatsfunktionäre erwarten durften. Weite Bevölkerungsgruppen drängten in den Klerus, um die hiermit verbundenen materiellen Vorteile zu genießen.² Die Kleriker bildeten in den Stadtgemeinden eine neue gesellschaftliche Elite.³

¹ Cod. Iust. 1, 55, 8 (409 n. Chr.); 1, 55, 11 (505 n. Chr.).

² Vgl. z.B. Ste. Croix 1981, 495.

³ Claude 1969, 187; Liebeschuetz 2001, 121.

Während zu den Honoratioren generell wie auch zu den Bischöfen eine Reihe substantieller Untersuchungen vorliegt, fehlt es demgegenüber an sozialhistorisch ausgerichteten Arbeiten zum spätantiken Klerus. Weit davon entfernt, die Quellen in ihrer überwältigenden Fülle umfassend ausgewertet zu haben, werde ich mich im folgenden auf die Situation in Gallien, Italien und in geringerem Umfang Hispanien konzentrieren, Regionen, für die die Quellenlage im ausgehenden 5. und im 6. Jh. als besonders günstig zu bezeichnen ist. Die gesellschaftliche Stellung des christlichen Klerus soll im wesentlichen unter drei Aspekten beleuchtet werden: soziale Herkunft, Vermögensverhältnisse und Lebensstandard, Beziehungen zwischen Bischof und Klerus. Dies wird auf die Frage führen, inwieweit die christlichen Kleriker als eigenständige und geschlossene Gruppe im politischen Leben der Stadt des 5./6. Jh. hervorgetreten sind und ob sie als eine neue gesellschaftliche Elite definiert werden können.

Rekrutierung von Klerikern und soziale Herkunft

Wir sind für keinen Zeitpunkt der Spätantike in der Lage, die Zahl der Kleriker im Römischen Reich exakt anzugeben. Eine Tendenz zur Zunahme ist jedoch unverkennbar. Nicht nur gab es immer mehr Bistümer; auch innerhalb der einzelnen Diözesen stieg die Zahl der Kleriker. Neben den Bischofskirchen wurden zumindest in den größeren Städten weitere städtische bzw. suburbane Kirchen errichtet, die jeweils ihre eigenen Priester, Diakone und niederen Kleriker hatten.⁴ In Karthago wurden etwa in der zweiten Hälfte des 5. Jh. immer noch mehr als 500 Kleriker, darunter freilich viele Lektoren, die noch im Kindesalter standen, gezählt, obwohl ein Teil der Geistlichen bereits vorher vor den Vandalen geflohen war.⁵ Der Gesetzgeber suchte der Zunahme der Zahl der Kleriker in den Städten entgegenzuwirken: Bereits Konstantin ordnete an, nur noch frei werdende Klerikerstellen zu besetzen, jedoch keine neuen zu schaffen.⁶ Justinian sah sich genötigt, ihre Zahl an der Großen Kirche von Konstantinopel auf 425 zu begrenzen.⁷ Da hierzu noch die Kleriker kommen, die an einer der zahlreichen anderen Kirchen Dienst taten, müssen wir im Konstantinopel des 6. Jh. insgesamt wohl mit einer vierstelligen Zahl von Klerikern rechnen.

Die Zahlen, die für Italien und Gallien zur Verfügung stehen, sind unzureichend und geben lediglich eine Größenordnung vor. An der Bischofskirche von Ravenna lag die Zahl der Kleriker im 6. Jh. bei mindestens 60, darunter 10 Priester und 11 Diakone.⁸ Sie dürfte an den anderen Bischofskirchen Galliens und

⁴ Zu den stadtrömischen *tituli* im 4./5. Jh. vgl. Ch. Pietri 1976, 634ff., zu den gallischen Stadtpfarreien in Spätantike und frühem Mittelalter Ewig 1960, 67ff. Zur Entwicklung des Kirchenbaus vergleiche man die Bände der *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIII^e siècle*, Bd. 1ff., Paris 1986ff.

⁵ *Vict. Vit.* 3, 34 (CSEL 7, 89).

⁶ *Cod. Theod.* 16, 2, 6 (326 n. Chr.).

⁷ *Nov. Iust.* 3, pr.; 1 (535 n. Chr.).

⁸ Agnellus, *Lib. pont. eccl. Rav.* 60.

Italiens angesichts von deren geringerer Wirtschaftskraft zwar kleiner gewesen sein, sich aber in aller Regel doch noch immer im zweistelligen Bereich bewegt haben.

Beinahe noch augenfälliger als in der Stadt war die Entwicklung auf dem Land: Das Christentum war bis in das 4. Jh. hinein vor allem in den Städten präsent; es wurde nun verstärkt auf das Land getragen. Wie kaum in einer anderen Region läßt sich dank der Angaben des Gregor von Tours die Ausbreitung des Christentums im Bistum Tours verfolgen: Es wurden hier in der Spätantike mindestens 27 Landgemeinden eingerichtet; die Mehrzahl dieser Gründungen ist in das 5. Jahrhundert zu datieren. Gegen dessen Ende existierte im gesamten Bistum bereits ein dichtes Netz von Kirchen; für die meisten Landbewohner betrug der Weg zur nächsten Kirche nicht mehr als 10 km. Ähnlich ist das Bild in der Diözese Auxerre.⁹ Genaue Angaben hinsichtlich der Zahl der an den Parochialkirchen Dienst leistenden Kleriker lassen sich zwar nicht machen; die Kirchen hatten aber in aller Regel einen Archipresbyter, dem mehrere Presbyter, Diakone und niedere Kleriker unterstanden.¹⁰ Zumindest einem Teil der privaten Oratorien waren ebenfalls Kleriker zugewiesen.¹¹ Die vermögenden Grundbesitzer strebten danach, die auf ihren Landgütern errichteten Kirchen in den Status von Parochialkirchen erheben zu lassen. In diesem Fall war gemäß den Konzil von Orléans von 541 zu gewährleisten, daß an diesen Kirchen Kleriker in hinreichender Zahl zur Verfügung standen.¹²

Auch in Italien fand ein Ausbau kirchlicher Strukturen statt. Privatleute waren, trotz der schwierigen wirtschaftlichen Lage, in der sich Italien befand, auch an der Wende vom 6. zum 7. Jh. noch in der Lage, Kirchen zu errichten, die zwar auch hier nicht allesamt, aber doch zu einem gewissen Teil ihren eigenen Klerus erhielten.¹³

Die Notwendigkeit, binnen kurzem ein dichtes Netz von Kirchen zu errichten, sowie die nur geringen finanziellen Ressourcen vieler Kirchen hatten zur Folge, daß die Rekrutierung geeigneten Nachwuchses die allergrößten Schwierigkeiten bereitete. Es wurden Personen auch gegen ihren Willen und unter Anwendung von Zwang zu Klerikern geweiht, ein Mißstand, den Kaiser Maiorian 460 auf gesetzlichem Wege zu unterbinden suchte.¹⁴ Die schwierige ökonomische Lage trug nicht dazu bei, daß sich die Situation entspannte: Gegen Ende des 5. Jh. war in Italien aufgrund der Kriegswirren sowie von Hungersnöten die Zahl der Kleriker so gesunken, daß an manchen Orten überhaupt kein Gottesdienst mehr abgehalten werden konnte.¹⁵ Insbesondere bereitete es Schwierigkeiten, die

⁹ Greg. Tur., *Franc.* 10, 31; Griffe 1975; Stancliffe 1979, 47ff.

¹⁰ Conc. Turonense (567 n. Chr.), C. 20 (19) (CCL 148 A, 183f.).

¹¹ Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 5 (CCL 148 A, 25); C. 25 (ibid. 30); Conc. Claremontanum (535 n. Chr.), C. 15 (ibid. 109); Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 7 (ibid. 133f.).

¹² Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 26 (CCL 148 A, 139); 33 (ibid. 140).

¹³ Greg. M., *Epist.* 2, 6 (CCL 140, 94); 2, 11 (ibid. 98); 5, 50 (ibid. 344); 9, 58 (CCL 140 A, 615f.); 9, 72 (ibid. 627f.).

¹⁴ Nov. Maior. 11 (460 n. Chr.).

¹⁵ Gelasius, *Epist.* 14, 1 (Thiel 362).

Privatkirchen mit geeignetem Personal zu versehen. Papst Gelasius war beispielsweise mit der Anfrage eines gewissen Theodorus konfrontiert, der für eine auf seinem Grundbesitz errichtete Kirche einen Mönch als Priester in Aussicht genommen hatte. Gelasius lehnte eine sofortige Priesterweihe ab, dem Kirchenrecht sei Genüge zu tun; Also wird angeordnet, den Mönch zunächst zum Subdiakon zu weihen, in der Woche darauf könne die Priesterweihe folgen.¹⁶

Ein Jahrhundert später mehren sich im Briefwechsel Gregors des Großen die Hinweise auf Kirchen jeden Typs, städtische wie ländliche, Gemeindekirchen oder Kirchen auf privatem Grundbesitz, die überhaupt nicht oder nur höchst unzureichend mit Klerikern versehen waren. Die Kriegswirren und die hieraus resultierende wirtschaftliche Krise Italiens im 6. Jh., von der auch die Kirche betroffen war, waren einer der Gründe für den Klerikermangel. Als Kleriker aus Formiae nach Sizilien übergesiedelt waren, wies Gregor der Große den Bischof von Syrakus an, die Männer wieder ihrem Bischof zu überstellen, der in seinem Bistum nicht über genügend Presbyter und Diakone verfüge.¹⁷ Zumal in kleineren Ortschaften fehlte es an Klerikern; viele Kirchen verfielen. In einem Fall überträgt Gregor die Obhut über eine vernachlässigte Kirche einem benachbarten Kloster. Dessen Abt erhält den Auftrag, die anfallenden Einnahmen der Kirche für deren Wiederaufbau zu verwenden.¹⁸ Wiederholt sieht sich Gregor genötigt, Bischofssitze zusammenzulegen; begründet werden diese Maßnahmen mit starkem Bevölkerungsrückgang sowie akutem Klerikermangel.¹⁹

Schwierigkeiten, Nachwuchs zu rekrutieren, bestanden nicht nur in Italien. Ein gallisches Kirchenkonzil warnt, die wachsende Zahl der Kirchen und den damit einhergehenden größeren Personalbedarf zum Vorwand zu nehmen, das Niveau zu senken. Kein Laie solle zum Bischof geweiht werden, und auch angehende Presbyter und Diakone sollten vor ihrer Weihe zumindest ein Jahr im Klerus gedient haben.²⁰ Da auch auf der spanischen Halbinsel zu Beginn des 6. Jh. viele Gemeindekirchen nicht besetzt waren, werden die Bischöfe ermahnt, jährliche Inspektionsreisen durchzuführen und Kirchen, die verwaist waren, mit geeignetem Personal zu versehen.²¹ Ein Jahrhundert später hatte sich ein weiteres spanisches Kirchenkonzil mit demselben Problem zu befassen.²²

Es waren, wie bereits erwähnt, vielfach die Kriegswirren des fünften und sechsten Jahrhunderts, die für den Klerikermangel verantwortlich waren. Die Schwierigkeiten, Kleriker in hinreichender Zahl zu rekrutieren, waren jedoch auch struktureller Art: Man hielt an einen Mindeststandard fest; im Laufe der Zeit

¹⁶ Gelasius, Epist. 41 (Thiel 454).

¹⁷ Greg. M., Epist. 4, 42 (CCL 140, 263).

¹⁸ Greg. M., Epist. 9, 7 (CCL 140 A, 569). Vgl. auch noch Epist. 9, 94 (CCL 140 A, 648): Ein *defensor ecclesiae* hatte Kirchengut einer Kirche, an der es keinen eigenen Klerus mehr gab, eingezogen. Sein Sohn weigerte sich, als er das Erbe seines verstorbenen Vaters angetreten hatte, die Vermögenswerte herauszugeben.

¹⁹ Greg. M., Epist. 1, 8 (CCL 140, 10); 1, 77 (ibid. 85); 9, 60 (CCL 140 A, 617).

²⁰ Conc. Arelatense (524 n. Chr.), C. 2 (CCL 148 A, 43f.).

²¹ Conc. Tarraconense (516 n. Chr.), C. 8 (Vives 36f.).

²² Conc. Tol. IV (633 n. Chr.), C. 33 (Vives 204).

wurden immer mehr Personengruppen vom Klerus ausgeschlossen.²³ Der Kandidat sollte lesen und schreiben können,²⁴ nur einmal verheiratet sein und dies nicht mit einer Witwe.²⁵ Diakone und Presbyter sollten bei ihrer Weihe mindestens 25 bzw. 30 Jahre alt sein. Angesichts einer geringen Lebenserwartung implizierte selbst diese *prima facie* moderat erscheinende Altersgrenze eine deutliche Einschränkung des Rekrutierungsreservoirs.²⁶

Mit den Curialen, den Sklaven und Kolonen waren große Teile der Bevölkerung zumindest prinzipiell von der Klerikerkarriere ausgeschlossen. Nicht nur in der weltlichen, sondern auch in der kirchlichen Gesetzgebung wurde daran festgehalten, daß Curiale, die aufgrund ihrer Vermögensverhältnisse und einer vergleichsweise guten Bildung an sich geeignete Kandidaten abgegeben hätten, vom Klerus ferngehalten werden sollten.²⁷ Noch Gregor der Große warnt davor, Curiale zu Klerikern zu weihen.²⁸ So verwundert es nicht, daß ein Klerikermangel nicht erst in dem wiederholt von Kriegen heimgesuchten Italien des 5./6. Jh., sondern bereits an der Wende vom 4. zum 5. Jh. in Nordafrika zu verzeichnen war. Augustin benennt dabei ausdrücklich das Verbot, Curiale zu Klerikern zu weihen, als den wesentlichen Grund für diese Schwierigkeiten.²⁹

Wollte man den Personalbedarf decken, so waren also andere Wege zu beschreiten. Immer wieder findet sich in den kirchlichen Quellen des ausgehenden 5. und des 6. Jh. die Empfehlung, den Klerikermangel dadurch zu beheben, daß man auf Mönche zurückgreife.³⁰ Dies linderte die Schwierigkeiten, löste aber das Problem nicht. Vielfach wurden daher die kirchenrechtlichen Bestimmungen sehr großzügig ausgelegt. So wurde etwa die beschleunigte Weihe von Laien zu Priestern toleriert. Gelasius entschied, daß dort, wo der Klerikermangel besonders akut sei, auch Personen aus dem Laienstand zum Priesteramt geführt werden könnten: Binnen eines Jahres sollten sie die niederen Weihen erhalten.³¹

In anderen Fällen wurde das kanonische wie das weltliche Recht überhaupt umgangen. Symptomatisch ist bereits ein Brief von Papst Innozenz (401–417) an

²³ Lafontaine 1963.

²⁴ Conc. Aurelianense (533 n. Chr.), C. 16 (CCL 148 A, 101); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 11 (ibid. 256); Gelasius, Epist. 14, 2 (Thiel 362f.); 14, 3 (ibid. 363f.); 14, 16 (ibid. 371f.); 15, 1 (ibid. 379); 16, 1 (ibid. 380f.).

²⁵ Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 2 (CCL 148 A, 24); Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 10 (ibid. 134).

²⁶ Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 16f. (CCL 148, 201); Conc. Arelatense (524 n. Chr.), C. 1 (CCL 148 A, 43); Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 6 (ibid. 116f.); Caes. Arel., Sermon. 1, 14 (CCL 103, 10f.); Nov. Iust. 123, 13 (546 n. Chr.); Blokscha 1931.

²⁷ Innocent., Epist. 2, 12, 14 (PL 20, 477f.); 3, 4, 7 (ibid. 490f.); Lib. pontif. 44 (Duchesne I, 227) (Bonifatius I.); Gelasius, Epist. 14, 2f. (Thiel 362/4).

²⁸ Greg. M., Epist. 2, 31 (CCL 140, 117f.); 4, 26 (CCL 140, 244/6).

²⁹ Cod. Theod. 16, 2, 32 (398 n. Chr.); Reg. eccl. Carthag. excerpta 55 (Conc. Carthag. 397) (CCL 149, 191f.); Reg. eccl. Carthag. excerpta (Not. de gestis conc. Carthag. 16 iunii 401) (ibid. 194f.); Aug., Epist. 22*, 1f. (CSEL 88, 113f.).

³⁰ Gelasius, Epist. 14, 2f. (Thiel 362/4); 41 (ibid. 454); Pelag., Epist. 57 (Gassó/Battie 149/52); Greg. M., Epist. 6, 27 (CCL 140, 399); Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 27 (CCL 148, 205).

³¹ Gelasius, Epist. 14, 2f. (Thiel 362/4).

einen Bischofskollegen, der in seiner Diözese mit großem Eifer alte Kirchen erneuert sowie neue errichtet hatte. Da es ihm aber für die Besetzung der Klerikerstellen an geeignetem Personal fehlte, griff er, entgegen den kirchlichen *Canones*, auch auf Verstümmelte oder auf Personen, die zum zweiten Mal verheiratet waren, zurück.³² Ähnliches kam im weiteren Verlauf des 5. und 6. Jh. immer wieder vor. Durch kirchliche wie weltliche Gesetzgebung wurde das Reservoir, aus dem Kleriker rekrutiert werden konnten, immer mehr begrenzt, während gleichzeitig der Bedarf wuchs. Viele Bischöfe konnten gar nicht wählerisch sein, wollten sie denn nicht zahlreiche Klerikerstellen vakant lassen. Es kam einer Quadratur des Kreises gleich, eine immer größere Zahl von Stellen zu besetzen, dabei aber gleichzeitig auf die moralische Qualifikation, den sozialen Stand, die Bildung und den Familienstand der Kandidaten zu achten. So wurden denn bis ins ausgehende 6. Jh. hinein Knaben zu Klerikern geweiht,³³ Personen, die zum zweiten Mal oder mit einer Witwe verheiratet waren,³⁴ und selbst Analphabeten.³⁵ Entgegen dem Kirchenrecht wurde auch immer wieder auf Sklaven zurückgegriffen.³⁶

Das Wachstum des Klerus führte insbesondere dazu, daß die Kleriker zunehmend aus den einfachen Bevölkerungsschichten, darunter auch, wie wir gesehen haben, dem Sklavenstand, rekrutiert wurden.³⁷

Im Jahre 439 hatte Valentinian III. eine Vermögensgrenze von immerhin 300 *Solidi* genannt, bis zu welcher der Eintritt in den Klerus völlig frei sei, ohne daß die Kandidaten befürchten müßten, zum Dienst in der Curie herangezogen zu werden.³⁸ Ein Besitz von 300 *Solidi* war in einer Gesellschaft, in der der Großteil der Bevölkerung am Rande des Existenzminimums lebte, recht ansehnlich. Die Kleriker dürften also in dieser Zeit noch mehrheitlich aus den besitzenden Schichten rekrutiert worden sein. Im weiteren aber sank das soziale Niveau der Kleriker deutlich.

Selbstverständlich gehörte auch im 6. Jh. eine gewisse Zahl von Klerikern den Oberschichten an; von einigen unter ihnen heißt es bei Gregor von Tours ausdrücklich, sie stammten aus dem Senatorenstand oder seien „vornehmer Abkunft“. ³⁹ Andere Kleriker können zwar nicht diesem Milieu zugerechnet werden,

³² Innocent., *Epist.* 37, 2 (PL 20, 603).

³³ Greg. M., *Epist.* 3, 47 (CCL 140, 191f.); 3, 48 (ibid. 193f.).

³⁴ Conc. Valentinum (374 n. Chr.), C. 1 (CCL 148, 38f.); Conc. Arausicanum (441 n. Chr.), C. 24 (25) (ibid. 84); Conc. Arelatense sec. (442/506 n. Chr.), C. 45 (ibid. 123); *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, C. 85 (69) (ibid. 180); Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 1 (ibid. 193); C. 43 (ibid. 211).

³⁵ Greg. M., *Epist.* 7, 11 (CCL 140, 460); Dial. 3, 37, 19 (Vogüé/Antin 2, 424); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 11 (CCL 148 A, 256).

³⁶ Leo M., *Epist.* 4, 1 (PG 54, 611); Gelasius, *Epist.* 14, 2f. (Thiel 362/4); 14, 14 (ibid. 370f.); 20 (ibid. 386/8); 21 (ibid. 388); 22 (ibid. 389); 23 (ibid. 389f.); 24 (ibid. 390f.); Greg. Tur., *Vit. Mart.* 3, 28 (MGH, SRM 1, 639); Conc. Aurelianense (511 n. Chr.), C. 8 (CCL 148 A, 7); Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 29 (26) (ibid. 124f.); Conc. Aurelianense (549 n. Chr.), C. 6 (ibid. 150); vgl. Jonkers 1942; Gaudemet 1958, 136ff.; Rousselle 1977, 361f.; Klein 1991.

³⁷ Vgl. für die Diözese Tours hierzu auch L. Pietri 1983, 638ff., für die stadtrömischen Kleriker und sonstigen Mitarbeiter der Kirche Ch. Pietri 1986, 115f.

³⁸ Nov. Val. 3 (439 n. Chr.).

³⁹ Greg. Tur., *Glor. mart.* 1, 86 (MGH, SRM 1, 546); *Vit. patr.* 8, 1 (ibid. 691).

verfügten aber immerhin über einen gewissen Besitz. Gregor der Große rechnet beispielsweise mit der Möglichkeit, daß die Versorgung von Klerikern, die wegen eines Vergehens in einem Kloster inhaftiert wurden, aus deren eigenem Vermögen sichergestellt werden kann.⁴⁰ Ein gallisches Kirchenkonzil geht davon aus, daß Kleriker den durch den Verlust von Besitzurkunden entstandenen wirtschaftlichen Schaden der Kirche aus eigenem Vermögen erstatten können.⁴¹ Viele Kleriker hatten nicht nur Grundbesitz, sondern hielten auch Sklaven.⁴² Dies macht sie aber nicht schon zu wohlhabenden Männern, denn die Verfügung über Sklaven war in der Spätantike, und dies gilt noch für das 6. Jh., sehr viel weiter gestreut, als man früher in der Forschung angenommen hat. Auf einen gewissen Besitz weist auch hin, wenn Priester Pferde ihr eigen nannten.⁴³ Andere Kleriker prunkten mit kostbarer Kleidung. So sah sich das Konzil von Narbonne 589 genötigt, den Klerikern die Purpurfarbe ausdrücklich zu untersagen; diese sei ein Zeichen „weltlicher Prahlucht“.⁴⁴

Kleriker stifteten Kirchen und Klöster oder trugen zu deren baulichen Ausgestaltung bei.⁴⁵ Ein Diakon der Kirche von Asculum errichtete zur Zeit Gregors des Großen ein Kloster, welches er mit Ländereien ausstattete.⁴⁶ Ein anderer Diakon war in der Lage, den Bau einer Kirche zu finanzieren und diese zum Unterhalt des Gebäudes sowie zur Versorgung der an ihr tätigen Presbyter mit jährlichen Einkünften von 10 Solidi auszustatten.⁴⁷ Die genannten Kleriker zählten aber sicher nicht zu den Großgrundbesitzern: Güter mit einem jährlichen Ertrag von 10 Solidi waren nichts anderes als Kleinbauernhöfe. Im übrigen stellten die Kleriker unter den Stiftern von Kirchen oder Klöstern, von denen wir in der Korrespondenz Gregors des Großen erfahren, nur eine Minderzahl. Eine Auswertung der Mosaikinschriften aus den norditalischen Kirchen führt zu einem ähnlichen Ergebnis: Die Kleriker befanden sich auch hier unter den Stiftern in der Minderheit, und in den Mosaikflächen, die von ihnen finanziert wurden, fügen sie

⁴⁰ Greg. M., Epist. 1, 42 (CCL 140, 54).

⁴¹ Conc. Agathense (506), C. 26 (CCL 148, 204f.).

⁴² Conc. Arausicanum (441 n. Chr.), C. 5f. (CCL 148, 79); Conc. Arelatense sec. (442/506 n. Chr.), C. 32 (31) (ibid. 120); Conc. Turonense (567 n. Chr.), C. 20 (19) (CCL 148 A, 183f.); Greg. Tur., Franc. 4, 43; 7, 47; 10, 14; Vit. Mart. 4, 20 (MGH, SRM 1, 654f.); 4, 43 (ibid. 660); Vit. patr. 8, 2 (ibid. 692); Glor. conf. 24 (MGH, SRM 1, 763f.); Greg. M., Epist. 9, 108 (CCL 140 A, 660f.); Dial. 3, 20, 1 (Vogüé/Antin 2, 350). Die Kirchenkonzilien wenden sich wiederholt dagegen, daß sich in Klerikerhaushalten Sklavinnen oder Freigelassene weiblichen Geschlechts aufhielten: Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 11 (CCL 148, 200); Conc. Claremontanum (535 n. Chr.), C. 16 (CCL 148 A, 109f.); Conc. Aspasii (551 n. Chr.), C. 2 (ibid. 163); Conc. Turonense (567 n. Chr.), C. 11 (ibid. 179f.); vgl. auch Caes. Arel., Serm. 41, 3 (CCL 103, 181f.).

⁴³ Greg. M., Dial. 1, 9, 10 (Vogüé/Antin 2, 84); Epist. 9, 8 (CCL 140 A, 569f.); Greg. Tur., Glor. mart. 72 (MGH, SRM 1, 536f.).

⁴⁴ Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 1 (CCL 148 A, 254).

⁴⁵ Pelag., Epist. 86 (Gassé/Battie 209/11); Greg. Tur., Glor. conf. 49 (MGH, SRM 1, 777f.); Greg. M., Epist. 9, 43 (CCL 140 A, 601); 9, 49 (ibid. 608); 9, 59 (ibid. 616); 9, 138 (ibid. 688f.); 11, 13 (ibid. 879f.).

⁴⁶ Greg. M., Epist. 13, 16 (CCL 140 A, 1016).

⁴⁷ Greg. M., Epist. 2, 6 (CCL 140, 94).

sich in das soziale Umfeld der übrigen Stifter sehr gut ein. Es handelte sich um „kleine Leute“.⁴⁸

Die Tatsache, daß, wie wir bereits gesehen haben, im ausgehenden 5. und im 6. Jh. in wachsender Zahl Mönche zu Klerikern geweiht wurden, dürfte zu einer gewissen Absenkung des sozialen Niveaus des Klerus beigetragen haben. Denn das Mönchtum rekrutierte sich zu einem großen Teil aus den Unterschichten, und es fanden so auch ehemalige Sklaven Aufnahme in den Klerus.⁴⁹ Die Angaben, die sich Gregor von Tours entnehmen lassen, weisen auf eine Herkunft der meisten Kleriker aus den unteren Bevölkerungsschichten hin.⁵⁰ Mehrfach werden sie ausdrücklich als „arm“ (*pauper*) bezeichnet.⁵¹ „Armut“ ist in antiker Terminologie allerdings nicht mit völliger Mittellosigkeit gleichzusetzen, die Betreffenden werden somit Kleinbesitzer gewesen sein.

Die meisten städtischen Kleriker entstammten also weder den Ober-, noch den völlig mittellosen Unterschichten. Sie sind den besitzenden Bevölkerungsgruppen zuzuordnen, waren aber nicht in der Lage, von ihrem Vermögen als Rentier zu leben. Ihre Existenz war recht prekär. Unvorhergesehene finanzielle Belastungen mochten sie in große Schwierigkeiten bringen. Bei Gregor dem Großen lesen wir von einem Subdiakon, der während einer Hungersnot in einem Kloster um etwas Öl betteln mußte.⁵² Eine andere Belastung war im 6. Jh. die Notwendigkeit, Familienangehörige aus der Kriegsgefangenschaft auszulösen. Gregor der Große erteilt einem Bischof die Anweisung, einem *redemptor* die Summe von 12 Solidi, die dieser für den Freikauf eines Klerikers aufgewendet hatte, zu erstatten. Der Kleriker war nicht in der Lage, die Summe aus eigenem Vermögen aufzubringen; er gehörte also wohl den ärmeren Bevölkerungsschichten an.⁵³ Ein anderer Kleriker hatte 130 Solidi zum Freikauf der Töchter als Darlehen aufgenommen; Gregor der Große weist einen Bischof an, die Schulden aus der Kasse der Kirche zu zahlen; 30 Solidi hatte der Kleriker immerhin selbst zurückzahlen können.⁵⁴

Vor allem die Kleriker auf dem Land stammten oftmals aus ärmlichen Verhältnissen: Grundbesitzer, die eine Kirche stifteten, hatten das Recht, dem Bischof, der für die Ordinierung der Kleriker zuständig war, Kandidaten zu benen-

⁴⁸ Caillet 1993, 418ff.

⁴⁹ Greg. Tur., Vit. patr. 5, 1 (MGH, SRM 1, 677f.); Greg. M., Epist. 9, 108 (CCL 140 A, 660f.).

⁵⁰ Greg. Tur., Virt. Mart. 1, 7 (MGH, SRM 1, 592f.); 2, 13 (ibid. 613); 2, 26 (ibid. 618/9); Franc. 5, 49.

⁵¹ Greg. Tur., Franc. 5, 49; Virt. Mart. 2, 15 (MGH, SRM 1, 613f.). Auch in Italien sind „arme“ Kleriker bezeugt. Einem Archidiakon, dem von seinem Bischof zehn Solidi geraubt worden waren und der in Armut geraten ist, soll diese Summe gemäß einer Anweisung Gregors des Großen zurückerstattet werden: Greg. M., Epist. 5, 27 (CCL 140, 294).

⁵² Greg. M., Dial. 2, 28 (Vogüé/Antin 2, 216/8).

⁵³ Greg. M., Epist. 4, 17 (CCL 140, 235f.).

⁵⁴ Greg. M., Epist. 7, 35 (CCL 140, 498f.). Zwei weitere Beispiele: Ein Diakon hatte sich verschulden müssen, um sich aus der Kriegsgefangenschaft freikaufen zu können; ihm sollte aus Mitteln der Kirche geholfen werden: Epist. 3, 40 (CCL 140, 185f.). In einem anderen Fall waren elf Pfund Silber zum Freikauf einer Klerikerfamilie (Vater, Mutter, zwei Söhne) von der Kirche aufgewendet worden; die beiden Söhne (jetzt ihrerseits im Klerus) sollten eine Rückforderung der Summe nicht befürchten müssen: Epist. 9, 52 (CCL 140 A, 610).

nen. Es handelte sich in aller Regel um Gutsangehörige, um Kolonen. Bereits ein Gesetz aus dem Jahr 398 sah vor, daß Kleriker aus dem *vicus* bzw. der *possessio*, auf der sich die Kirche befand, genommen werden und weiterhin für ihre Steuern (*capitatio*) haftbar sein sollten.⁵⁵ Der Gesetzgebung Justinians läßt sich entnehmen, daß es sich bei den Gutsklerikern zumeist um örtliche *adscripticii* handelte, die ihrem Grundbesitzer gegenüber weiterhin zur Erledigung der ihnen obliegenden landwirtschaftlichen Arbeiten verpflichtet waren.⁵⁶ Nicht anders dürfte die Lage in Gallien bzw. Italien gewesen sein: Gregor der Große rechnet mit der Möglichkeit, daß Kleriker, die wegen eines sexuellen Fehlverhaltens in Klosterhaft genommen wurden, von kirchlichen Gütern stammten; es wird sich in diesem Fall um Sklaven oder Kolonen gehandelt haben.⁵⁷ Gegenüber dem 4. Jh. nahm die Zahl der auf privaten Gütern tätigen Kleriker im 5. und 6. Jh. stark zu, in dem Maße, wie viele Grundbesitzer Kirchen errichteten, die zwar nicht allesamt, aber doch zu einem großen Teil mit einem eigenen Klerus ausgestattet waren. Schaut man auf den Klerus in seiner Gesamtheit, so muß dies zur Folge gehabt haben, daß sich dessen soziales Profil im 6. Jh. gegenüber dem 4. Jh. deutlich gewandelt hat. Ein größerer Teil der Kleriker als je zuvor dürfte sich aus den Unterschichten, vor allem den ländlichen, rekrutiert haben. Nur noch vergleichsweise wenige Kleriker waren damit der städtischen Kultur verbunden.

Versorgung der Kleriker

Die wenigsten Kleriker waren also wirtschaftlich unabhängig; sie mußten zumeist für ihren Lebensunterhalt mit eigener Hände Arbeit sorgen oder waren auf die kirchlichen Unterstützungen angewiesen; zumeist war beides der Fall.

In Italien galt der Grundsatz, daß die kirchlichen Einkünfte in vier Teile aufzuteilen seien; der Bischof hatte Anspruch auf ein Viertel, jeweils ein weiteres Viertel war für den Unterhalt der Kirchengebäude, die Armenpflege und schließlich die Versorgung der an der Bischofskirche tätigen Kleriker aufzuwenden.⁵⁸

In Gallien hingegen wurden keine Quoten festgelegt. Lediglich das Konzil von Orléans von 511 bestimmte, daß von den Gaben der Gläubigen die Hälfte an den Bischof gehen sollte, die andere Hälfte aber unter die Kleriker (entsprechend ihrem Rang) zu verteilen sei.⁵⁹ Vielfach ist in den gallischen Quellen von einem *stipendium* für die Kleriker die Rede.⁶⁰ Dies mögen zum Teil Geldzahlungen gewesen sein. Mehr und mehr setzte sich in Gallien wie auch in Hispanien aber die Praxis durch, Klerikern zur Bestreitung des Lebensunterhaltes kirchlichen

⁵⁵ Cod. Theod. 16, 2, 33 (= Cod. Iust. 1, 3, 11) (398 n. Chr.).

⁵⁶ Nov. Iust. 123, 17, 1 (546 n. Chr.).

⁵⁷ Greg. M., Epist. 1, 42 (CCL 140, 54).

⁵⁸ Jones 1960.

⁵⁹ Conc. Aurelianense (511 n. Chr.), C. 14 (CCL 148 A, 9).

⁶⁰ Statuta ecclesiae antiqua, C. 35 (49) (CCL 148, 172); Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 36 (ibid. 208); Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 12 (11) (CCL 148 A, 119); C. 22 (19) (ibid. 122f.); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 10–13 (ibid. 256).

Grundbesitz zu überlassen. Bei Gregor von Tours ist dies ein ganz gängiges Prinzip der Versorgung.⁶¹ Ein Kleriker, der in einer anderen Stadt zum Bischof gewählt wurde, soll, so ein gallisches Kirchenkonzil des Jahres 517, seiner Kirche das, was er zur Bestreitung seines Lebensunterhaltes erhalten hatte, zurückerstatten; bei den Versorgungsgütern ist an Grundbesitz zu denken.⁶² Wenn ein Kleriker, der an einer Bischofskirche Dienst getan hatte, eine Parochialkirche oder eine sonstige Kirche übernahm, so stand es dem Bischof nach einem Beschluß des Konzils von Orléans von 538 frei, das Kirchengut, von dem er bislang seinen Lebensunterhalt bestritten hatte, an sich zu ziehen, da, wie es heißt, dem Geistlichen die Ressourcen der Kirche, an der er Dienst tue, genügen müßten.⁶³

Wenngleich die Vergabe von kirchlichem Grundbesitz als unentgeltliche Prekarie in Italien augenscheinlich unüblich war,⁶⁴ so wurden doch auch hier kirchliche Güter an Kleriker verpachtet, wobei es immer wieder vorkam, daß sich die Kleriker weigerten, den Pachtzins zu zahlen.⁶⁵ Erhielt ein Kleriker von der Kirche Land, so wurde sein Gehalt reduziert.⁶⁶

Für den Bischof mochte es bequemer sein, Land in Form einer Prekarie oder als Pachtland auszugeben, statt es von seinen Leuten bewirtschaften zu lassen und dann die Geldeinkünfte unter die Kleriker zu verteilen. Die Nachteile lagen aber auf der Hand. Denn es bestand stets die Gefahr, daß kirchlicher Grundbesitz in Privateigentum überführt wurde. Gallische Kirchenkonzilien versuchten zu unterbinden, daß der über lange Jahre genutzte Landbesitz (für den hier kein Pachtzins oder sonstiges Entgelt zu entrichten war) in den Privatbesitz der Kleriker überging.⁶⁷ Papst Symmachus untersagt in einem Brief an Caesarius von Arles die Veräußerung von kirchlichen Ländereien, gestattet aber Ausnahmen: Man könne Grundbesitz, der durch Testament oder Schenkung an die Kirche gefallen sei, einem Kloster oder Klerikern zur Bestreitung ihres Lebensunterhaltes überlassen, dies allerdings allenfalls zur Nutzung auf Lebenszeit. Mit dem Tod des Nutznießers müsse das Land an die Kirche zurückfallen. Vor allem sei darauf zu achten, daß niemand allein um der materiellen Vorteile willen in den Dienst der Kirche trete.⁶⁸

Die Kleriker waren, dies ergab sich aus ihrer sozialen Herkunft, zu einem großen Teil auf die Zuwendungen der Kirche, so kümmerlich sie im Einzelfall

⁶¹ Greg. Tur., *Franc.* 2, 36 und *Vit. patr.* 4, 1 (MGH, SRM 1, 674f.); *Franc.* 5, 49; 6, 36.

⁶² Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 14 (CCL 148 A, 27).

⁶³ Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 21 (18) (CCL 148 A, 122).

⁶⁴ Papst Gelasius warnt davor, den Klerikern Land zu überlassen. Vielmehr sollen die Pachteerträge des kirchlichen Grundbesitzes nach der bekannten Regel geviertelt werden: Gelasius, *Frq.* 24 (Thiel 498).

⁶⁵ Greg. M., *Epist.* 2, 36 (CCL 140, 121) (Africa); 9, 195 (CCL 140 A, 749f.).

⁶⁶ Greg. M., *Epist.* 8, 1 (CCL 140 A, 513f.).

⁶⁷ Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 22 (CCL 148, 203); C. 12 (59) (*spur.*) (*ibid.* 226); Conc. Aurelianense (511 n. Chr.), C. 23 (CCL 148 A, 11); Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 18 (*ibid.* 28f.); Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 18 (*ibid.* 136); C. 34 (*ibid.* 141); Conc. Arelatense (554 n. Chr.), C. 6 (*ibid.* 172); Conc. Clippiacense (626/7 n. Chr.), C. 2 (*ibid.* 292).

⁶⁸ Symmachus papa, *Epist.* 15, 1–3 (Thiel 723f.) (513 n. Chr.).

auch ausfallen mochten, angewiesen.⁶⁹ Gregor der Große ordnete an, daß die Zahlungen an einen erkrankten Kleriker, die der Bischof eingestellt hatte, wiederaufgenommen werden sollten, und wies darauf hin, daß man künftighin kaum mehr Personen finden werde, die in den Klerikerstand einzutreten bereit seien, wenn sie befürchten müßten, daß ihnen im Krankheitsfall die Zahlungen gestrichen würden.⁷⁰ Die Tatsache, daß die Kleriker auf ihr *stipendium* angewiesen waren, erklärt, warum eine Strafmaßnahme gegen nachlässige Kleriker darin bestand, die Zahlung ihres Gehaltes auszusetzen.⁷¹

Es gab keinen für den einzelnen Kleriker einklagbaren Anspruch auf eine Grundversorgung: Der Bischof hatte das den Klerikern zustehende Viertel der kirchlichen Einkünfte unter sie nach Rang und Verdienst aufzuteilen und hatte hierbei einen großen Ermessensspielraum.⁷² In Catania war es gegen Ende des 6. Jh. zwischen dem niederen Klerus auf der einen Seite, den Priestern und Diakonen auf der anderen Seite zu einem Gehaltskonflikt gekommen. Nach lokaler Gewohnheit gingen 2/3 der den Klerikern zustehenden Einkünfte an die Priester und Diakone, 1/3 an den niederen Klerus. Gregor der Große entschied, daß das den Klerikern zustehende Viertel der Einkünfte vom Bischof nach eigenem Ermessen unter die Kleriker zu verteilen sei. Einzelne Kleriker konnten also entsprechend ihren Leistungen besser gestellt werden, auf der anderen Seite war auf diese Weise dem Bischof ein starkes Druckmittel gegenüber seinem Klerus in die Hand gegeben.⁷³

So verwundert es nicht, daß die Versorgung der Kleriker aus kirchlichen Einkünften zu ständigen Konflikten zwischen dem Bischof einerseits, den Presbytern, Diakonen und dem niederen Klerus andererseits führte. Gregor der Große hielt es für angezeigt, Bischofskollegen darauf hinzuweisen, daß sie verpflichtet seien, ihren Klerikern den gewohnten Unterhalt zukommen zu lassen.⁷⁴ Immer wieder werden in den italischen Quellen Klagen laut, daß dem Klerus nicht das ihm geschuldete Viertel der kirchlichen Einkünfte zugefallen sei.⁷⁵ Die Bischöfe befanden sich bei der Verteilung der Gelder in einer stärkeren Position.

⁶⁹ Gregor von Tours erzählt die Geschichte eines Diakons der Kirche von Langres, der sich unrechtmäßig am Kirchengut bereichert und hiervon Grundbesitz und Sklaven gekauft hatte. Als der zuständige Bischof ihm das unrechtmäßig Erworbene nahm, blieb ihm kaum noch etwas nach, so daß er, wie es bei Gregor von Tours heißt, von nun an sich seinen Lebensunterhalt mit eigener Hände Arbeit verdienen mußte: Greg. Tur., Franc. 5, 5.

⁷⁰ Greg. M., Epist. 2, 7 (CCL 140, 95). Die Kleriker der Kirche von Capua, die sich in Nola aufhalten, sollen, so die Anweisungen Gregors, aus den Einkünften ihrer Kirche wie bisher den vierten Teil erhalten, „damit sie ihren Dienst gegenüber ihrer Kirche geflissentlicher erfüllen“: Epist. 5, 27 (CCL 140, 294). Anlässlich der Besetzung einer vakanten Stelle weist Gregor der Große den zuständigen Bischof an, die Erträge aus den Ländereien der Kirche dem Priester bereits für das laufende Jahr zur Verfügung zu stellen, damit er seinen Aufgaben nachkommen könne: Epist. 2, 12 (CCL 140, 99).

⁷¹ Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 13 (CCL 148 A, 256); vgl. auch C. 11 (ibid. 256).

⁷² Gelasius, Epist. 14, 27 (Thiel 378); 15, 2 (ibid. 379f.); 16, 2 (ibid. 381); Frg. 23 (ibid. 496f.); Greg. M., Epist. 5, 27 (CCL 140, 294); 13, 45 (CCL 140 A, 1051f.).

⁷³ Greg. M., Epist. 8, 7 (CCL 140 A, 524).

⁷⁴ Greg. M., Epist. 1, 64 (CCL 140, 74); 2, 9 (ibid. 96f.).

⁷⁵ Simplicius, Epist. 1 (Thiel 175/7).

So wendet sich Gregor der Große in einem Brief an den syrakusanischen Bischof gegen den Mißstand, daß Bischöfe neu hinzugekommene Einnahmequellen für sich monopolisierten und die Viertelung nur bei den alten Einkünften durchführten.⁷⁶ In einem anderen Fall hatten die Kleriker von Ariminum gegen einen *visitor* Klage über die ungerechte Verteilung der Kircheneinkünfte erhoben. Gregor der Große befand, der *visitor* solle sich bei der Verwaltung des kirchlichen Besitzes auf den einheimischen Klerus stützen (d.h. nicht auf von außen mitgebrachte Leute).⁷⁷

Genaue Angaben über die Höhe der den Klerikern zustehenden Gehälter können wir nicht machen. Es ist fraglich, ob die Zunahme des Kirchenvermögens mit der wachsenden Zahl der Kleriker Schritt hielt; dies gilt gerade für die wirtschaftlich schwierigen Zeiten des 6. Jh. Es ist bezeichnend, daß im Osten Justinian die Belastungen, die sich aus dem Unterhalt eines übermäßig wuchernden Klerus für die Kirchenfinanzen ergaben, als Motiv für seine Bemühungen benennt, die Zahl der Kleriker zu begrenzen.⁷⁸ Das Problem, welches Justinian in allgemeinen Worten für die seiner Herrschaft unterstehenden Gebiete anspricht, bestand auch in Italien oder Gallien: Die allermeisten Kirchen waren ihren Klerikern nur bescheidene Summen zu zahlen in der Lage, manche waren mit der Alimentierung der Kleriker überhaupt überfordert. In einem Fall setzt Gregor der Große einem, wie es heißt, verarmten *defensor ecclesiae* eine jährliche Rente von 6 Solidi aus. Das ist sicherlich kein Einkommen, das einen aufwendigen Lebensstil gestattet hätte.⁷⁹ Ein Presbyter erhielt (einmalig) eine Summe von zwei Solidi.⁸⁰ Auch sonst handelte es sich bei den Beträgen, die den Klerikern zustanden, vielfach lediglich um kleine Summen. Ein Beispiel: Ein Bischof hatte nicht, wie vorgeschrieben, einen Teil der kirchlichen Einkünfte auf den Klerus und die Armen verwandt. In diesem Zusammenhang werden von Gregor dem Großen die Summen aufgelistet, die jetzt an die Kleriker und die Armen gehen sollen (und die vom Nachfolger auszuzahlen sind); die Presbyter und die Diakone sowie weitere Kleriker erhalten 100 Solidi. Da die Gesamtzahl der unterstützungsberechtigten Kleriker nicht genannt wird, läßt sich nicht angeben, welcher Betrag den Klerikern jeweils zustand, auch wissen wir nicht, für welchen Zeitraum (sicherlich länger als ein Jahr) die Summen geschuldet wurden. Jedenfalls dürfte auf den einzelnen Kleriker nur ein kleiner Betrag entfallen sein.⁸¹ Sonderleistungen konnten daher von großem Interesse sein. In Italien hatten die Kleriker Anspruch darauf, zur Zeit der Weinlese von den kirchlichen Gütern zu einem günstigen Preis Wein zu kaufen.⁸²

⁷⁶ Greg. M., Epist. 4, 11 (CCL 140, 228/30).

⁷⁷ Greg. M., Epist. 5, 48 (CCL 140, 341f.). Vgl. auch noch Greg. Tur., Franc. 4, 7: Ein Bischof, der mit einem widerspenstigen Priester konfrontiert war, entzog diesem sowie dessen Anhängern das Kirchengut, so daß sie, wie es heißt, „völlig mittellos (*inanes ac vacuos*)“ dastanden.

⁷⁸ Nov. Iust. 6, 8 (535 n. Chr.).

⁷⁹ Greg. M., Epist. 9, 110 (CCL 140 A, 662).

⁸⁰ Greg. M., Epist. 1, 23 (CCL 140, 21).

⁸¹ Greg. M., Epist. 11, 22 (CCL 140 A, 892f.).

⁸² Greg. M., Epist. 13, 45 (CCL 140 A, 1051f.).

Man darf sich von den Versorgungsleistungen der Kirche also keine falschen Vorstellungen machen. Die meisten Kirchen waren auch im 6. Jh. nur kärglich ausgestattet. Manche Bistümer verfügten zur Zeit Justinians im Osten über jährliche Einkünfte von weniger als 2 Pfund Gold. Da hieraus der Bischof zu versorgen war sowie Ausgaben für karitative Zwecke und den Unterhalt der Kirchengebäude zu tätigen waren, standen für die Priester, Diakone und niederen Kleriker nur geringe Mittel zur Verfügung.⁸³ Es ist kaum vorstellbar, daß die ökonomische Lage der Bischofskirchen im Westen im Durchschnitt besser gewesen sein soll als diejenige der Kirchen im oströmischen Reich. In Ravenna, sicher einer der reichsten Kirchen, wurden jährlich 3000 Solidi, also rund 40 Pfund Gold, an die Kleriker ausgezahlt.⁸⁴ Den meisten anderen Kirchen ging es sehr viel schlechter. Eine Kirche hatte angeblich lediglich einen Weinberg, aus dessen Erträgen der Unterhalt der Kleriker zu leisten war.⁸⁵ Am Ende des 6. Jh. waren einzelne Bischofskirchen gar nicht mehr imstande, ihre Kleriker zu unterstützen. Gregor der Große ordnete demzufolge im Falle der Kirche von Canusium an, daß deren Kleriker, die Not litten, ihren Unterhalt aus den Gütern der römischen Kirche finanziert bekommen sollten.⁸⁶ Aber selbst in Rom war die Kirche nicht in der Lage, für alle Kleriker und Asketen in angemessener Weise aufzukommen: Pelagius führt in seinen Briefen wiederholt Klage über die mißliche wirtschaftliche Situation der römischen Kirche.⁸⁷

Die finanzielle Lage der Gemeindekirchen war zumeist noch sehr viel prekärer als die der Bischofskirchen. Einzelne Parochialkirchen befanden sich in Italien in solch großer Bedrängnis, daß der Verkauf geweihten Kirchengeräts ins Auge gefaßt werden mußte.⁸⁸ Kirchenkonzilien billigten den Bischöfen in Gallien auch den Zugriff auf die Vermögenswerte der Parochialkirchen zu; manche Bischöfe mißbrauchten dieses Recht, so daß Gemeindekirchen kaum noch in der Lage waren, für den Unterhalt der Kirchengebäude und die Alimentierung der Kleriker aufzukommen.⁸⁹ Die Situation in Hispanien war ähnlich. Ein Kirchenkonzil benennt hier die Habgier der Bischöfe, die mehr als das ihnen zustehende Drittel der Einkünfte der Gemeindekirchen für sich beanspruchten, als wesentlichen Grund dafür, daß nicht nur die Gebäude verfielen, sondern es auch an einer hinreichenden Zahl von Klerikern fehlte. Die Kleriker waren offenkundig auf die Einkünfte ihrer Kirchen für die Sicherung des Lebensunterhaltes angewiesen.⁹⁰ Auf ihren Inspektionsreisen verlangten die Bischöfe von den Landgemeinden

⁸³ Nov. Iust. 123, 3 (546 n. Chr.).

⁸⁴ Agnellus, *Lib. pont. eccl. Rav.* 60.

⁸⁵ Greg. M., *Dial.* 1, 9, 2 (Vogüé – Antin 2, 76).

⁸⁶ Greg. M., *Epist.* 1, 42 (CCL 140, 54).

⁸⁷ Pelag., *Epist.* 85 (Gassó/Batlle 207f.); 94 (*ibid.* 223f.). Zur Zeit Gregors des Großen gab es in Rom 3000 Nonnen, die von der Kirche alljährlich 80 Pfund Gold erhielten. Gregor der Große beklagt jedoch, daß diese Summe angesichts der großen Zahl zu versorgender Frauen keineswegs hinreichend sei: *Epist.* 7, 23 (CCL 140, 474/8).

⁸⁸ Pelag., *Epist.* 17 (Gassó/Batlle 51f.).

⁸⁹ Conc. Aurelianense (511 n. Chr.), C. 15 (CCL 148 A, 9); Conc. Carpentoratense (527 n. Chr.) (*ibid.* 48).

⁹⁰ Conc. Tol. IV (633 n. Chr.), C. 33 (Vives 204).

eine Gebühr, das sogenannte *cathedraticum*. Diese Gebühr durfte in Italien, aber auch in Spanien maximal 2 Solidi betragen; hierdurch wird ein sehr enger Rahmen für die finanzielle Leistungsfähigkeit der meisten Landkirchen vorgegeben.⁹¹ Manche von Privatleuten gestiftete Kirchen verfügten am Ende des 6. Jh. über jährliche Einkünfte von zehn, sechs oder gar nur drei Solidi. Es ist ganz undenkbar, daß hiervon die Kirchengebäude instand gehalten und auch noch der Lebensunterhalt der dort tätigen Geistlichen bestritten werden konnte.⁹²

Vielfach war also für die Versorgung der an den zahlreichen kleineren Kirchen tätigen Kleriker nur in höchst unzureichendem Maße gesorgt. Ein Gesetz Justinians beklagt, daß viele Privatleute die Erlaubnis, eine Kirche zu errichten, vom zuständigen Bischof eingeholt hätten, ohne vorher die Kirche mit dem notwendigen Kapital ausgestattet zu haben. Diesen Personen gehe es lediglich um den eigenen Ruhm. Sie sollten sich lieber eine der vielen Kirchen in Konstantinopel und den Provinzen vornehmen, die vor dem Verfall ständen, und sie wiederaufbauen und mit dem notwendigen Kapital für den laufenden Betrieb ausstatten.⁹³ Der Text zeigt, aus welcher Motivation heraus Kirchen errichtet wurden; der Kirchenbau stand in der Tradition des antiken Euergetismus. Demgegenüber kümmerten sich viele Bauherren nicht um die Frage, wie denn der Betrieb der Kirchen auf lange Sicht finanziert werden sollte. Die Folgen waren evident: Die Gebäude verfielen, die Kleriker darben. Im Westen war die Lage nicht anders, wie u.a. die wiederholten Mahnungen der gallischen und spanischen Kirchenkonzilien zeigen, es sei sicherzustellen, daß die auf privaten Grundbesitz errichteten Oratorien mit einem für den Unterhalt der Gebäude wie die Versorgung der an ihnen tätigen Kleriker hinreichenden Kapital ausgestattet seien.⁹⁴ Dieser Verpflichtung wurde vielfach nicht nachgekommen. Es bildete sich im 6. Jh. somit so etwas wie ein klerikales Proletariat.

Kleriker, die keinen erbten Besitz hatten, der es ihnen ermöglicht hätte, von der Grundrente zu leben, führten demzufolge eine sehr ärmliche Existenz. Vielfach waren sie genötigt, einer Erwerbstätigkeit nachzugehen.⁹⁵ Manche waren in Handels- oder Finanzgeschäfte verwickelt.⁹⁶ Eine kirchenrechtliche Quelle aus der zweiten Hälfte des 5. Jh. legt in Gallien den Klerikern nahe, ein Handwerk auszuüben.⁹⁷ Die meisten Kleriker dürften in den überwiegend ja nur sehr kleinen

⁹¹ Pelag., Epist. 25 (Gassó/Batlle 79f.); Synodus Bracarenis II (572 n. Chr.), C. 2 (Vives 81f.); vgl. auch noch Gelasius, Frg. 20 (Thiel 494f.).

⁹² Greg. M., Epist. 2, 6 (CCL 140, 94); 9, 72 (CCL 140 A, 627f.).

⁹³ Nov. Iust. 67, pr.; 1f. (538 n. Chr.).

⁹⁴ Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 25 (CCL 148 A, 30); Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 33 (ibid. 140); Synodus Bracarenis II (572 n. Chr.), C. 5 (Vives 83). Als Bischof Palladius von Saintes Kirchen für die Heiligen Petrus und Paulus, Laurentius und Pancratius errichtet und er hierfür von Gregor dem Großen Reliquien empfängt, ermahnt ihn dieser ausdrücklich, dafür Sorge zu tragen, daß es den hier tätigen Klerikern nicht am Lebensunterhalt fehle: Greg. M., Epist. 6, 50 (CCL 140, 423).

⁹⁵ Greg. Tur., Virt. Mart. 3, 28 (MGH, SRM 1, 639).

⁹⁶ Conc. Arelatense sec. (442/506 n. Chr.), C. 14 (CCL 148, 117); Conc. Turonense (461 n. Chr.), C. 13 (ibid. 147); Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 30 (27) (CCL 148 A, 125); Conc. Clippiacense (626/7 n. Chr.), C. 1 (ibid. 291f.).

⁹⁷ Statuta ecclesiae antiqua, C. 29 (52) (CCL 148, 171); 45 (53) (ibid. 173); C. 79 (51) (ibid. 179).

Städten Galliens oder Italiens aber von der Landwirtschaft gelebt haben,⁹⁸ sei es, daß sie eigenes Land bestellten, sei es, daß sie Land der Kirche, welches sie entweder zur Pacht (Italien) oder als unentgeltliche Prekarie (Gallien) erhalten hatten, bewirtschafteten.

Die Kleriker konnten infolgedessen nur einen Teil ihrer Zeit ihren eigentlichen Aufgaben widmen, und sie waren, soweit sie Landwirtschaft betrieben, dem städtischen Leben kaum noch verbunden. Sie kamen ihren geistlichen Aufgaben vielfach nur in unzureichender Weise nach. Immer wieder wird in den Quellen auf die Pflichtvergessenheit der Kleriker angespielt. Caesarius von Arles ermahnt zu Beginn des 6. Jh. die Kleriker, nicht allzuviel Zeit auf die Bewirtschaftung des ihnen von der Kirche zur Bestreitung ihres Lebensunterhaltes zur Verfügung gestellten Grundbesitzes zu verwenden; man begnüge sich damit, allenfalls für zwei oder drei Stunden pro Tag den Arbeitskräften Anweisungen zu geben. Offenkundig widmeten sich zahlreiche Kleriker ganztägig dem Ackerbau.⁹⁹ Dies hatte Konsequenzen im Hinblick auf die Stadtsässigkeit des Klerus, auch des an den städtischen Kirchen tätigen. Daß hier ein Problem bestand, folgt aus der sich bei Caesarius anschließenden Mahnung: Die Kleriker seien in erster Linie verpflichtet, für das spirituelle Wohlergehen der Gläubigen Sorge zu tragen. Wenn sich denn einmal die Notwendigkeit ergebe, die Ländereien zu besuchen, so solle man möglichst bald wieder zu seinen geistlichen Aufgaben in die Stadt zurückkehren.¹⁰⁰ Ein Kirchenkonzil drohte Klerikern, die selbst an den hohen geistlichen Festtagen wie Ostern, Pfingsten oder Weihnachten nicht am Gottesdienst teilnahmen, sondern sich statt dessen ihren weltlichen Geschäften widmeten, mit der Exkommunikation. Dieselbe Strafe hatten Diakone oder Presbyter zu gewärtigen, die während dreier Wochen von ihrer Kirche absent waren.¹⁰¹ Es ist mit einem gar nicht so geringen Anteil von Klerikern zu rechnen, die zwar an einer städtischen Kirche Dienst taten, sich tatsächlich aber permanent dem Ackerbau widmeten.

Auf dem Land gingen noch sehr viel mehr Kleriker als in der Stadt einer Erwerbstätigkeit nach. Private Grundbesitzer ließen die von ihnen gegründeten Kirchen von gutsansässigen Bauern leiten; diese widmeten sich weiterhin dem Ackerbau.¹⁰² In den Landgemeinden fand der Gottesdienst anders als an den städtischen Kirchen zumeist nur einmal in der Woche statt; Die Kleriker waren darum frei, unter der Woche einer manuellen Tätigkeit nachzugehen; so mancher kam, wie die Kirchenkonzilien wiederholt monierten, nicht einmal am Sonntag seinen geistlichen Pflichten nach. So sah sich ein spanisches Kirchenkonzil genötigt, anzuordnen, daß die Kleriker sich schon am Sonnabend abends versammelten, damit man sicher war, daß sie allesamt am sonntäglichen Gottesdienst teilnahmen. Die Kleriker waren oftmals so weit von ihrer Kirche entfernt, daß

⁹⁸ *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, C. 29 (52) (CCL 148, 171). Grundbesitzer als Kleriker: Greg. Tur., *Franc.* 4, 12.

⁹⁹ Caes. Arl., *Serm.* 1, 6f. (CCL 103, 5).

¹⁰⁰ Caes. Arl., *Serm.* 1, 8 (CCL 103, 6).

¹⁰¹ Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 17 (64) (spur.) (CCL 148, 227).

¹⁰² Nov. Iust. 123, 17, 1 (546 n. Chr.).

man sie nicht an einem Tag herbeiholen konnte.¹⁰³ Ein gallisches Kirchenkonzil schärft gegen Ende des 6. Jh. noch einmal den Schutz der Sonntagsruhe ein; auch Kleriker, die vermutlich einer Erwerbstätigkeit nachgingen, hatten sie verletzt.¹⁰⁴ Man möchte beinahe sagen, daß sich die liturgischen Aufgaben für viele Kleriker auf eine Freizeitbeschäftigung reduzierten. Die wenigsten Kleriker waren hauptberuflich für die Kirche tätig. Die „Professionalisierung“ des Klerus blieb in Ansätzen stecken; die in den kirchlichen Quellen immer wieder zu lesende Forderung, Kleriker sollten sich ausschließlich dem Dienste Gottes widmen, ist offenbar nicht in vollem Umfang durchzusetzen gewesen. Eine Geschichte, die von Gregor dem Großen erzählt wird, ist symptomatisch für das niedrige Niveau der geistlichen Betreuung, welches den Landbewohnern von Seiten ihrer Priester zuteil wurde: Ein Priester arbeitete im Weinberg, als er gebeten wurde, einem Todkranken beizustehen; die Arbeit war ihm jedoch wichtiger, und der Kranke starb, bevor der Geistliche an seinem Bett stand, um ihm seinen Trost zu spenden.¹⁰⁵

Klerus und Bischof

Wie gestalteten sich die Beziehungen zwischen Bischof und Klerus? Waren die Kleriker in der Lage, im städtischen Leben neben dem Bischof eine eigenständige Rolle zu spielen?

Der Bischof hatte in seiner Diözese eine quasi-monarchische Stellung. Ihm allein kam die Einsetzung und Kontrolle des in seinem Bistum tätigen Klerus zu. Bischöfen wurde in Gallien untersagt, in einer fremden Diözese Kleriker zu weihen bzw. zu befördern oder Kleriker aus einer anderen Diözese bei sich aufzunehmen.¹⁰⁶ Errichtete ein Bischof in einer fremden Diözese auf eigenem Grund und Boden eine Kirche, so blieb ihm dies zwar unbenommen. Die Kirche zu weihen, oblag aber dem Bischof, in dessen Diözese die Kirche lag. Auch die Ordinierung der an dieser Kirche Dienst leistenden Kleriker fiel diesem zu, wobei er allerdings gehalten war, die Personalvorschläge des Bauherrn zu berücksichtigen.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Conc. Tarraconense (516 n. Chr.), C. 7 (Vives 36). Vernachlässigung der Präsenzpflicht: Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 17 (64) (spur.?) (CCL 148, 227); Conc. Aurelianense (511 n. Chr.), C. 28 (CCL 148 A, 12); Conc. Aurelianense (533 n. Chr.), C. 14 (ibid. 101); Conc. Matisconense (581/3 n. Chr.), C. 10 (ibid. 225). Selbst Kleriker, die innerhalb der Stadtmauern weilten, versäumten die morgenlichen Hymnen: Conc. Veneticum (461/91 n. Chr.), C. 14 (CCL 148, 155); vgl. auch *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, C. 35 (49) (ibid. 172).

¹⁰⁴ Conc. Matisconense (585 n. Chr.), C. 1 (CCL 148 A, 239f.).

¹⁰⁵ Greg. M., *Dial.* 1, 12, 1 (Vogüé/Antin 2, 112/4).

¹⁰⁶ Conc. Taurinense (398 n. Chr.), C. 7 (CCL 148, 58); Conc. Arausicanum (441 n. Chr.), C. 7 (8) (ibid. 79f.); Conc. Andegavense (453 n. Chr.), C. 9 (ibid. 138); Conc. Turonense (461 n. Chr.), C. 9 (ibid. 146); Conc. Veneticum (461/91 n. Chr.), C. 10 (ibid. 154); Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 5 (CCL 148 A, 25); Conc. Claremontanum (535 n. Chr.), C. 11 (ibid. 107); Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 16 (15) (ibid. 120f.); C. 17 (ibid. 121); Conc. Aurelianense (549 n. Chr.), C. 5 (ibid. 149f.); Conc. Arelatense (554 n. Chr.), C. 7 (ibid. 172).

¹⁰⁷ Diese Bestimmungen sind auch ein Indiz für den ökonomischen Rang vieler gallischer

Die Kirche insistierte darauf, daß Kleriker und Mönche der kirchlichen Gerichtsbarkeit unterstehen sollten. Kleriker hatten Klagen gegen Laien vor ein staatliches Gericht zu bringen; umgekehrt sollten Klagen von Laien gegen Kleriker vor das Bischofsgericht kommen. Immer wieder werden die weltlichen Richter davor gewarnt, Kleriker ihrer Gerichtsbarkeit zu unterwerfen.¹⁰⁸ Kleriker durften die weltlichen Gerichte nur mit Genehmigung ihres Bischofs einschalten,¹⁰⁹ und sie werden ermahnt, Streitigkeiten mit ihren Kollegen nicht vor weltlichen Gerichten auszutragen.¹¹⁰

Die Tatsache, daß Kleriker der bischöflichen Gerichtsbarkeit unterworfen waren, bedeutete nicht an sich schon einen Vorteil. Denn hiermit war dem Bischof eine weitreichende Disziplinargewalt in die Hand gegeben. Und die Strafen, die vom Bischof verhängt wurden, nahmen im Lauf der Zeit an Schärfe zu. Im 6. Jh. setzte sich die Klosterhaft als Strafmaßnahme für Kleriker durch. Der Kanon eines gallischen Kirchenkonzils bestimmt beispielsweise, daß ein Kleriker (Bischof, Priester oder Diakon), der ein Kapitalverbrechen begangen, ein Dokument gefälscht oder ein falsches Zeugnis abgelegt hat, auf Lebenszeit in einem Kloster zu inhaftieren sei.¹¹¹ Klerikern, die sich des Ehebruchs schuldig machten, drohte ebenfalls Verlust ihrer Würde und strafweise lebenslängliche Unterbringung im Kloster.¹¹² Es begegnen in den gallischen Konzilsbeschlüssen des 6. Jh. auch zeitlich begrenzte Haftstrafen.¹¹³

Immer häufiger wurden auch Körperstrafen verhängt.¹¹⁴ So weist Gregor der Große einen Bischofskollegen an, einen Subdiakon, der einen anderen Kleriker,

Bischöfe, die zum Teil über einen weit verstreuten Grundbesitz verfügten, auch außerhalb ihrer eigenen Diözese: Conc. Arausicanum (441 n. Chr.), C. 9 (10) (CCL 148, 80f.); Conc. Arelatense sec. (442/506 n. Chr.), C. 36 (35) (ibid. 121).

¹⁰⁸ Cassiod., Var. 8, 24 (CCL 96, 330/2); Conc. Arelatense sec. (442/506 n. Chr.), C. 31 (30) (CCL 148, 120); Epistola episcoporum Leonis, Victuri et Eustochi ad episcopos (453 n. Chr.) (ibid. 136); Conc. Andegavense (453 n. Chr.), C. 1 (ibid. 137); Conc. Veneticum (461/91 n. Chr.), C. 9 (ibid. 153); Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 32 (ibid. 207); Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 11 (CCL 148 A, 26f.); Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 24 (ibid. 30); Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 35 (32) (ibid. 126); Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 20 (ibid. 137); Conc. Aspasii (551 n. Chr.), C. 4 (ibid. 164); Conc. Matisconense (581/3 n. Chr.), C. 7 (ibid. 224); Conc. Matisconense (585 n. Chr.), C. 10 (ibid. 244); Conc. Parisiense (614 n. Chr.), C. 6 (4) (ibid. 276); Conc. Clippiacense (626/7 n. Chr.), C. 7 (ibid. 292f.).

¹⁰⁹ Conc. Clippiacense (626/7 n. Chr.), C. 20 (CCL 148 A, 295).

¹¹⁰ Conc. Matisconense (581/3 n. Chr.), C. 8 (CCL 148 A, 224f.); Syn. dioec. Autissiodorensis (561/605 n. Chr.), C. 35 (ibid. 269).

¹¹¹ Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 3 (50) (spur.? = Conc. Epaonense, C. 22) (CCL 148, 225; CCL 148 A, 29f.).

¹¹² Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 8 (CCL 148 A, 117).

¹¹³ Conc. Turonense (567 n. Chr.), C. 20 (19) (CCL 148 A, 183f.) (1 Monat); Conc. Matisconense (581/3 n. Chr.), C. 5 (ibid. 224) (1 Monat); C. 8 (ibid. 224f.) (1 Monat); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 5 (ibid. 255) (1 Jahr); Syn. dioec. Autissiodorensis (561/605 n. Chr.), C. 26 (ibid. 268) (3 Monate). – Vgl. auch noch Pelag., Epist. 34 (Gassó/Battle 93/5): Papst Pelagius wies einen Priester, der einem Diakon ein Auge ausgeschlagen hatte, strafweise ins Kloster ein. Ein anderer Kleriker wurde wegen Ehebruchs zur Ableistung von Buße ins Kloster geschickt. Wenn er das Kloster verlassen sollte, so hatte er die volle Strafe für Ehebruch zu erleiden; er sollte dann ins Exil geschickt werden: Pelag., Epist. 54 (ibid. 143).

¹¹⁴ Vgl. außer den weiter unten zitierten Stellen auch noch Conc. Venericum (461/91 n.

einen Diakon, unrechtmäßig angeklagt hatte, von seinem Amt zu entfernen, ihn öffentlich züchtigen zu lassen und zu verbannen.¹¹⁵ Es kam sogar vor, daß Kleriker von ihrem Bischof selbst gezüchtigt wurden.¹¹⁶

Es waren vor allem die niederen Kleriker, denen Körperstrafen drohten. Ein gallisches Kirchenkonzil ermahnt sie, ihren Aufgaben (zur Unterstützung der „seniores“) besser nachzukommen. Besserten sie sich nicht, so sollten Subdiakone ihr *stipendium* einbüßen, die niederen Kleriker waren zu züchtigen.¹¹⁷ Ein Presbyter, der gegen Ende des 6. Jh. in Tours Anspruch auf die Bischofswürde erhob, beschenkte die einflußreicheren Kleriker (*maiores*) mit Kirchenland, während er die unbedeutenderen Kleriker (*minores*) mit Schlägen, die auch mit Stöcken verabreicht wurden, einschüchterte. Es zeigt sich hier, wie auch sonst häufiger, eine Zweiteilung der klerikalen Gesellschaft; das Ansehen der einfachen Kleriker war so gering, daß sie ohne weiteres gezüchtigt werden konnten.¹¹⁸ Die Befreiung von Körperstrafen war bekanntermaßen in der spätantiken Gesellschaft eines der Elemente, welche die Honoratioren von der einfachen Bevölkerung abhoben. Ein Kleriker, dem mit der Züchtigung gedroht werden konnte, dürfte auch in der weltlichen Gesellschaft schwerlich als Respektsperson gegolten haben. Das Machtgefälle zwischen Bischof und Klerus, aber auch innerhalb des Klerus war so groß, daß es nicht ratsam erscheint, Bischof und Klerus in ihrer Gesamtheit als gesellschaftliche Elite zu definieren.

Die meisten Kleriker konnten, dies hat sich ja bereits oben gezeigt, nur begrenzte materielle Vorteile aus ihrem Amt ziehen. Die Verfügungsgewalt über das Kirchenvermögen lag beim Bischof, der seine Kleriker oftmals darben ließ. Es war dem Bischof über die kirchlichen Subsidien möglich, ökonomischen Druck auf seine Kleriker auszuüben. Die Gehälter waren zwar grundsätzlich „nach Rang und Verdienst“ gestaffelt. Für die meisten Kleriker aber gab es, auch wenn sie sich in langjährigem Dienst an der Kirche bewährt hatten, nur begrenzte Aufstiegsmöglichkeiten. Es verwundert daher nicht, daß gerade die Ehrgeizigen unter ihnen mit ihrer Lage äußerst unzufrieden waren.

Beförderungen innerhalb des Klerus sollten, so das Ideal, nach Anciennität erfolgen.¹¹⁹ An diesen Grundsatz hielten sich die Bischöfe nicht immer. Viele Kleriker waren frustriert. Der eine Kleriker neidete dem anderen seine Beförde-

Chr.), C. 13 (CCL 148, 155); Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 41 (ibid. 210); Greg. M., Epist. 4, 24 (CCL 140, 242f.).

¹¹⁵ Greg. M., Epist. 11, 53 (CCL 140 A, 956f.).

¹¹⁶ Greg. M., Epist. 12, 8 (CCL 140 A, 979f.).

¹¹⁷ Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 13 (CCL 148 A, 256).

¹¹⁸ Greg. Tur., Franc. 5, 49. Vgl. auch noch Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 15 (CCL 148 A, 27f.). Wenn Kleriker höheren Ranges an dem Gastmahl eines Häretikers teilgenommen haben, sollen sie auf ein Jahr exkommuniziert werden. Die „jüngeren“ (*iuniores*) Kleriker sollen demgegenüber gezüchtigt werden. Die Differenzierung zwischen den „jüngeren“ und den „älteren“ bzw. „angeseheneren“ Klerikern ist ganz gängig. Erstere werden gemäß einem Kirchenkonzil von Macon für ein Vergehen körperlich bestraft, die letzteren dagegen befristet von der Kommunion ausgeschlossen: Conc. Matisconense (581/3 n. Chr.), C. 8 (CCL 148 A, 224f.).

¹¹⁹ Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 23 (CCL 148, 203f.); Conc. Clippiacense (626/7 n. Chr.), C. 21 (CCL 148 A, 295).

rung.¹²⁰ Es bestanden starke Spannungen innerhalb des Klerus.¹²¹ In Einzelfällen kam es auch zu handgreiflichen Auseinandersetzungen.¹²²

Vor allem aber richtete sich der Groll unzufriedener Kleriker gegen den eigenen Bischof. In gewisser Hinsicht kann man geradezu von einem Klassengegensatz zwischen dem vor allem in Gallien und Hispanien zumeist aus den vornehmeren Bevölkerungsschichten stammenden Bischof und seinen Klerikern, die mehrheitlich den einfachen Bevölkerungskreisen zuzurechnen waren, sprechen. Kleriker klagten ihren Bischof vor weltlichen Gerichten an¹²³ und redeten schlecht über ihn oder beleidigten ihn.¹²⁴ Mit einer gewissen Regelmäßigkeit mußten sich die gallischen Kirchenkonzilien des 6. Jh. mit Widersetzlichkeiten der Kleriker gegen ihren Bischof beschäftigen.¹²⁵ Wiederholt handelt auch Gregor von Tours von der Opposition oder offenen Revolte von Klerikern gegen ihren Bischof.¹²⁶ Kleriker, die sich in Gegnerschaft zu ihrem Bischof befanden, unterstellten sich dem Schutz eines Nachbarrischofs, was die Autorität des Bischofs in seiner Diözese unterminierte.¹²⁷ Briefe Gregors des Großen handeln von der Unfähigkeit mancher Bischöfe, in ihrem Klerus für Disziplin zu sorgen. Vielfach taugten auch die dem Bischof an sich zu Gebote stehenden Zwangsmaßnahmen, Entzug des Gehalts, Haftmaßnahmen, Züchtigungen, nicht, um Fehlverhalten der Kleriker zu unterbinden.¹²⁸

Kleriker taten sich in „Verschwörungen“ (*coniurationes*) gegen ihren Bischof zusammen.¹²⁹ Drohten ihnen Disziplinarmaßnahmen oder befanden sie sich mit ihrem Bischof im Konflikt, unterstellten sie sich dem Schutz mächtiger Laien.¹³⁰ Das Konzil von Orléans 538 drohte Klerikern, die ihren Aufgaben nicht nachkamen und sich hierbei auf den Schutz einflußreicher Laien stützten, mit dem Entzug des kirchlichen Gehaltes (*stipendium*) und des ihnen zustehenden Anteils an den Gaben der Gläubigen.¹³¹ Die klerikale Gesellschaft war kein

¹²⁰ *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, C. 42 (54) (CCL 148, 173); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 5 (CCL 148 A, 255).

¹²¹ *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, C. 17 (55) (CCL 148, 169); C. 48 (59) (ibid. 174); Conc. Matisconense (581/3 n. Chr.), C. 8 (CCL 148 A, 224f.); Syn. dioec. Autissiodorensis (561/605 n. Chr.), C. 35 (ibid. 269).

¹²² Pelag., *Epist.* 34 (Gassó/Batlle 93/5).

¹²³ Gelasius, *Frg.* 13 (Thiel 490); Cassiod., *Var.* 1, 9 (CCL 96, 19f.).

¹²⁴ Conc. Taurinense (398 n. Chr.), C. 5 (CCL 148, 57); *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, C. 44 (57) (ibid. 173); Greg. Tur., *Vit. patr.* 6, 4 (MGH, SRM 1, 682f.).

¹²⁵ Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 2 (CCL 148, 193); Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 22 (19) (CCL 148 A, 122f.); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 10 (ibid. 256).

¹²⁶ Greg. Tur., *Franc.* 2, 23; 4, 7; 5, 49; 6, 36; *Vit. patr.* 6, 4 (MGH, SRM 1, 682f.).

¹²⁷ Greg. Tur., *Franc.* 10, 14.

¹²⁸ Greg. M., *Epist.* 4, 26 (CCL 140, 244/6).

¹²⁹ Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 24 (21) (CCL 148 A, 123); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 5 (ibid. 255); Conc. Clippiacense (626/7 n. Chr.), C. 3 (ibid. 292).

¹³⁰ Conc. Arelatense sec. (442/506 n. Chr.), C. 31 (30) (CCL 148, 120); Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 8 (ibid. 196); Conc. Arelatense (524 n. Chr.), C. 4 (CCL 148 A, 44); Conc. Claremontanum (535 n. Chr.), C. 4 (ibid. 106); Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 25 (ibid. 138); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 5 (ibid. 255); Conc. Parisiense (614 n. Chr.), C. 5 (3) (ibid. 276); Conc. Parisiense (614 n. Chr.), *Edictum Clotarii II*, C. 3 (ibid. 283).

¹³¹ Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 12 (11) (CCL 148 A, 119).

monolithischer Block; mächtige Laien wußten Interessengegensätze innerhalb des Klerus, vor allem aber zwischen Bischof auf der einen, Presbytern und Diakonen auf der anderen Seite, zu ihren Gunsten auszunutzen. Die Spannungen zwischen Klerikern und Bischof trugen dazu bei, die Stellung des Bischofs in seiner Heimatgemeinde auch gegenüber den weltlichen Behörden zu schwächen. Dies war ein wesentlicher Faktor dafür, daß sich so etwas wie eine „bischöfliche Stadtherrschaft“ auch in Gallien, Hispanien oder Italien im 6. Jh. nicht entwickeln konnte.¹³²

Die Landgeistlichen befanden sich gegenüber ihrem Bischof in einer anderen Position als die an der Bischofskirche tätigen Kleriker. Zwar unterstanden auch sie der Disziplinargewalt ihres Bischofs. Vielfach waren die Kontakte zwischen Bischof und Landklerus aber sehr locker und reduzierten sich auf gelegentliche Inspektionsreisen des Bischofs¹³³ oder darauf, daß sich die Presbyter, wie dies gallische Kirchenkonzilien fordern, einmal im Jahr in der Stadt zu einer Synode trafen.¹³⁴ Es galt zwar in Gallien der Grundsatz, daß der Bischof die Kontrolle über die Immobilien sowie die Sklaven der Gemeindekirchen haben sollte; von dem, was an Gaben am Altar niedergelegt werde, stand ihm ein Drittel zu,¹³⁵ und in manchen Fällen, dies hat sich bereits oben gezeigt, mißbrauchten die Bischöfe diese Verfügungsgewalt, um die Einkünfte der Parochialkirchen an sich zu ziehen. Vielfach aber waren die Presbyter an den Gemeindekirchen recht frei in der Finanzverwaltung,¹³⁶ und so müssen die gallischen Kirchenkonzilien wiederholt das ausdrückliche Verbot aussprechen, daß sie sich unrechtmäßig Eigentum der Kirche aneignen, es verkaufen, verschenken oder sonstwie veräußern.¹³⁷

Auch in anderer Hinsicht wirkten die Gemeindepriester nahezu autonom: Sie lasen auch an den großen kirchlichen Festtagen die Messe, vollzogen die Taufe und hatten nur wenig Kontakt zu ihrem Bischof.¹³⁸ Für einen einfachen Landbewohner bestand im 6. Jh. in Gallien kaum noch die Notwendigkeit, aus religiösen Gründen die Stadt aufzusuchen. Es vollzog sich eine Dezentralisierung religiöser

¹³² Diese Auffassung (die ausführlicher zu begründen wäre) steht im Widerspruch zur communis opinio der Forschung, jedenfalls soweit dies Gallien betrifft: s. Prinz 1973; Heinzelmann 1976; Baumgart 1995.

¹³³ Sulp. Sev., Dial. 2, 3 (CSEL 1, 183f.); 2, 9, 6 (ibid. 191); Vita Caes. Arel. 1, 50 (Morin 2, 317); 2, 18–22 (ibid. 332/4).

¹³⁴ Syn. dioec. Autissiodorensis (561/605 n. Chr.), C. 7 (CCL 148 A, 266).

¹³⁵ Conc. Aurelianense (511 n. Chr.), C. 15 (CCL 148 A, 9).

¹³⁶ Landgeistliche nahmen die ökonomischen Interessen ihrer Kirche selbst wahr: Greg. M., Epist. 2, 26 (CCL 140, 112f.).

¹³⁷ Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 2 (49) (spur.) (CCL 148, 225); C. 6 (53) (spur.) (ibid. 226); C. 7 (54) (spur.) (ibid. 226); Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 7 (CCL 148 A, 26); Conc. Aurelianense (538 n. Chr.), C. 26 (23) (ibid. 124); Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 11 (ibid. 134f.).

¹³⁸ Conc. Regense (439 n. Chr.), C. 4 (CCL 148, 68f.); Conc. Vasense (529 n. Chr.), C. 2 (CCL 148 A, 78f.). Vgl. auch noch Caes. Arel., Serm. 1, 12 (CCL 103, 8/10). Die Gemeindepriester mußten wiederholt ermahnt werden, das Chrisma in der Fastenzeit von ihrem eigenen Bischof, und zwar nach Möglichkeit persönlich und nicht durch einen jüngeren Geistlichen, zu holen: Conc. Vasense (442 n. Chr.), C. 3 (CCL 148, 97); Statuta ecclesiae antiqua, C. 87 (36) (ibid. 180); Syn. dioec. Autissiodorensis (561/605 n. Chr.), C. 6 (CCL 148 A, 266).

Funktionen; der Klerus war je länger desto weniger eine städtische Bevölkerungsgruppe und kann demzufolge auch kaum noch als Träger städtischer Kontinuität betrachtet werden.

Papst Gelasius suchte gegen den Mißstand vorzugehen, daß sich Priester in Italien bischöfliche Prärogativen anmaßten, indem sie unter anderem in eigener Autorität niedere Kleriker (Subdiakone u.a.) weihten.¹³⁹ Tatsächlich sorgten die Parochialgeistlichen relativ autonom zumeist selbst für die Rekrutierung ihres Nachwuchses: Das Konzil von Vaison bestimmt im Jahr 529, daß entsprechend einer schon in Italien weithin gepflegten Praxis die Priester an den Gemeindekirchen junge Knaben in ihrem eigenen Haus zunächst als Lektoren ausbilden, die dann, erwachsen geworden, ggf. ihre Nachfolge antreten sollen.¹⁴⁰ Die Presbyter hatten in den Gemeinden eine sehr starke Stellung. In Einzelfällen maßen sie es sich an, die ihnen unterstehenden Diakone oder Subdiakone ihres Amtes zu entheben, ohne daß sie vorher den Bischof hiervon in Kenntnis gesetzt hätten.¹⁴¹

Vor allem aber machte es Schwierigkeiten, die an Privatkirchen tätigen Kleriker der Kirchendisziplin zu unterwerfen.¹⁴² Sie konnten sich vielfach auf den Schutz ihrer Grundherren stützen. Diese verhinderten, daß der zuständige Archidiacon mit disziplinarischen Mitteln gegen die Kleriker vorging.¹⁴³ Was die Besetzung der Klerikerstellen an Privatkirchen anbelangte, so hatten deren Stifter ohnehin einen starken Einfluß.¹⁴⁴ Die Kleriker waren daher vielfach eher dem Grundbesitzer, auf dessen Grund und Boden die Kirche lag, als ihrem Bischof verbunden.

Die Stadtbindung des Landklerus wie auch der Landbevölkerung insgesamt nahm immer mehr ab. Gallische Kirchenkonzilien untersagen wiederholt, offenbar ohne durchgreifenden Erfolg, daß an den großen kirchlichen Festtagen an Privatkirchen Gottesdienst veranstaltet werde. Wenigstens an diesen Tagen sollten die Landbewohner die Gemeindekirchen oder die Bischofskirche in der Stadt besuchen. Ausdrücklich wird aber auch konzediert, die Landbewohner könnten an den anderen kirchlichen Festtagen die Oratorien ihrer Grundherren frequentieren, damit sie nicht (scil. durch den weiten Weg) „ermüdet“ würden.¹⁴⁵ Die Errichtung eines dichten Netzes von Gemeindekirchen sowie die Stiftung von Kirchen durch Privatleute auch und gerade auf dem Lande hatten zur Folge, daß der christliche Glaube, der während der Frühzeit des Christentums noch auf die Städte beschränkt gewesen war, jetzt sehr viel besser an die Landbevölkerung

¹³⁹ Gelasius, Epist. 14, 6 (Thiel 365f.).

¹⁴⁰ Conc. Vasense (529 n. Chr.), 1 (CCL 148 A, 78).

¹⁴¹ Conc. Arelatense (554 n. Chr.), C. 4 (CCL 148 A, 171).

¹⁴² Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), 16 (CCL 148 A, 139).

¹⁴³ Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 26 (CCL 148 A, 139); Conc. Cabilonense (647/53 n. Chr.), C. 14 (ibid. 306).

¹⁴⁴ Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 7 (CCL 148 A, 133f.).

¹⁴⁵ Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 21 (CCL 148, 202f.); Conc. Aurelianense (511 n. Chr.), C. 25 (CCL 148 A, 11); Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 35 (ibid. 33); Conc. Claremontanum (535 n. Chr.), C. 15 (ibid. 109); Conc. Aurelianense (541 n. Chr.), C. 3 (ibid. 132f.); vgl. auch Wood 1979, 66ff.

herangetragen werden konnte. Auf der anderen Seite hatte dies für die Städte die mißliche Konsequenz, daß sich die Bindungen der Landbewohner an die Stadt weiter lockerten.

Der Klerus als neue Elite?

Ökonomisch hatten die Kleriker den Laien wenig voraus: Sie stammten meist aus ärmlichen Verhältnissen, und das *stipendium*, welches ihnen vom Bischof gewährt wurde, sicherte keinen herausgehobenen Lebensstandard. Die Kleriker waren und blieben einfache Leute, sie fügten sich in ihrer Mehrzahl gut in ihr soziales Umfeld ein. Dies ergibt sich nicht zuletzt auch aus der in den kirchlichen Quellen an ihnen immer wieder laut werdenden Kritik: Viele Kleriker waren dem Alkohol verfallen.¹⁴⁶ Kleriker nahmen an Hochzeiten und weltlichen Gelagen teil.¹⁴⁷ Eine Geschichte bei Gregor von Tours fängt damit an, daß ein Dorfpriester seinen Sklaven ausschickt, um seine Nachbarn zu einem Trinkgelage einzuladen.¹⁴⁸ Die Landgeistlichen unterhielten offenkundig ein dichtes Netz sozialer Kontakte zu ihren Gemeindemitgliedern; sie waren eher Nachbarn als Autoritätspersonen.

Viele Geistliche widmeten sich weltlichen Aktivitäten: Gallische Kirchenkonzilien untersagten ihnen, der Jagd nachzugehen.¹⁴⁹ Manche gaben sich in den Säulenhallen der Kirchen, auf den Straßen und auf dem Markt dem Müßiggang hin, was nichts anderes heißt, als daß sie die gängigen Formen antiker Geselligkeit pflegten: Neuigkeiten und Klatsch wurden auf dem Markt ausgetauscht; hier traf man sich mit Freunden, Bekannten und Nachbarn.¹⁵⁰ Andere Kleriker waren, was als ungehörig galt, als Zuschauer bei öffentlichen Gerichtsverhandlungen oder Hinrichtungen anzutreffen.¹⁵¹ In ihrem äußeren Erscheinungsbild (Haartracht, Kleidung) hoben sich die Kleriker vielfach nicht von den Laien ab.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ Conc. Turonense (461 n. Chr.), C. 2 (CCL 148, 144f.); Conc. Veneticum (461/91 n. Chr.), C. 13 (ibid. 155); Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 41 (ibid. 210); Conc. Matisconense (585 n. Chr.), C. 6 (CCL 148 A, 241f.); Caes. Arel., Sermon. 55, 4 (CCL 103, 242f.); Greg. Tur., Glor. mart. 1, 86 (MGH, SRM 1, 546); Virt. Mart. 3, 38 (ibid. 641f.); Glor. conf. 64 (ibid. 785f.); Franc. 8, 34; 10, 14.

¹⁴⁷ Conc. Veneticum (461/91 n. Chr.), C. 11 (CCL 148, 154); C. 12 (ibid. 154); Statuta ecclesiae antiqua, C. 75 (63) (ibid. 178); C. 80 (70) (ibid. 179); Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 39f. (ibid. 209f.); Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 15 (CCL 148 A, 27f.); Syn. dioec. Autissiodorensis (561/605 n. Chr.), C. 40 (ibid. 270); Greg. Tur., Glor. mart. 106 (MGH, SRM 1, 561).

¹⁴⁸ Greg. Tur., Franc. 7, 47.

¹⁴⁹ Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 8 (55) (spur.) (CCL 148, 226); Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 4 (CCL 148 A, 25); Conc. Latunense (673/5 n. Chr.), C. 15 (ibid. 317).

¹⁵⁰ Statuta ecclesiae antiqua, C. 28 (47) (CCL 148, 171); C. 34 (48) (ibid. 172); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 3 (CCL 148 A, 254); Caes. Arel., Sermon. 74, 1–4 (CCL 103, 310/2).

¹⁵¹ Conc. Matisconense (585 n. Chr.), C. 19 (CCL 148 A, 247); Syn. dioec. Autissiodorensis (561/605 n. Chr.), C. 33f. (ibid. 269).

¹⁵² Conc. Agathense (506 n. Chr.), C. 20 (CCL 148, 202); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 1 (CCL 148 A, 254).

Auch im Bildungsniveau unterschieden sie sich – zumal auf dem Lande – kaum von ihren Gemeindemitgliedern. Kirchenkonzilien verweisen immer wieder auf die Notwendigkeit, daß sie doch wenigstens lesen und schreiben können sollten. Diese Forderung konnte nicht immer verwirklicht werden; so wurden Kompromisse geschlossen: Zur Not durften Presbyter, die Analphabeten waren, in ihrem Amt verbleiben; sie sollten allerdings verpflichtet werden, lesen und schreiben zu lernen. An höhere geistige Bildung war in diesem Kontext gar nicht zu denken.¹⁵³ Und von einer irgendwie gearteten theologischen Ausbildung konnte schon gar nicht die Rede sein. Gregor der Große führt in einem Fall die mangelnde Kenntnis der Psalmen als Begründung dafür an, daß ein Diakon nicht für die Bischofswürde in Betracht komme; offenbar waren in vielen Fällen die Bibelkenntnisse der Kleriker höchst unzureichend.¹⁵⁴ Ein gallisches Kirchenkonzil begnügt sich für angehende Priester und Diakone damit, daß sie lesen können und wissen, wie die Taufe vor sich geht.¹⁵⁵ Priester, die über eine mangelhafte Bibelkenntnis verfügten, wußten nicht so recht, wie sie ihre Predigten gestalten sollten. Caesarius meint: Wenn man dem Volk schon nicht die dunklen Stellen des Alten und des Neuen Testaments auslegen könne, so müsse man doch in der Lage sein, die Ehebrecher zu tadeln oder die Gläubigen zu ermahnen, kein falsches Zeugnis abzulegen, nicht zuviel Alkohol zu trinken, nicht bei Wahrsagern Zuflucht zu suchen. Mit christlicher Theologie hatte all dies nicht viel zu tun.¹⁵⁶

Solange das öffentliche Schulwesen noch funktionierte, mochte man gentigend Kräfte finden, die zumindest lesen und schreiben konnten und im Idealfall die Grundlagen der Rhetorik beherrschten. Die Schwierigkeiten wuchsen mit dem Niedergang der öffentlichen Schulen im 5. und vor allem im 6. Jh. Die Kleriker auf dem Lande waren keiner permanenten Beaufsichtigung unterworfen; die sporadischen Inspektionsreisen der Bischöfe waren nicht tauglich, um Mißstände in den Landgemeinden abzustellen. An eine wie auch immer geartete Fortbildung der Kleriker war unter diesen Umständen gar nicht zu denken. Caesarius von Arles hält es für sinnvoll, seine Kleriker zu ermahnen, auch außerhalb des Gottesdienstes die Bibel zu lesen und während der Mahlzeiten über religiöse Themen zu diskutieren.¹⁵⁷ Auch diese Äußerung macht deutlich, daß sich die Kleriker in ihrem sozialen Verhalten nur wenig von den gewöhnlichen Laien unterschieden. Wenn der Klerus wirklich zu einer homogenen Schicht hätte werden sollen, die sich in ihrem Lebensstil deutlich von den Laien abgehoben hätte, so hätte es eines Ausbildungssystems bedurft, wie es tatsächlich dann erst nach dem Tridentinum im 17. und 18. Jh. geschaffen wurde.

Es bietet sich uns vielmehr ein Bild weitgehender „Verweltlichung“. Man hüte sich aber vor einem negativen Urteil. Die Schwierigkeiten, qualifizierte Kleriker zu rekrutieren, waren strukturell bedingt; sie ergaben sich nicht zuletzt aus dem beschleunigten Wachstum der Kirche: Die Versorgung mit Nachwuchs

¹⁵³ Oben Anm. 24.

¹⁵⁴ Greg. M., Epist. 14, 11 (CCL 140 A, 1080f.).

¹⁵⁵ Conc. Aurelianense (533 n. Chr.), C. 16 (CCL 148 A, 101).

¹⁵⁶ Caes. Arl., Sermon. 1, 12 (CCL 103, 8/10).

¹⁵⁷ Caes. Arl., Sermon. 1, 17 (CCL 103, 13f.).

konnte hiermit nicht Schritt halten. Und die Tatsache, daß die meisten Geistlichen dem sozialen Milieu ihrer Gemeinde entstammten, hatte unbestreitbare Vorzüge: Während in den Städten die Bischöfe schon im 4. Jh. vielfach zur Entfaltung eines aufwendigen Lebensstiles neigten und den Kontakt mit dem einfachen Volk verloren hatten, tat sich auf dem Land keine Kluft zwischen Klerus und Bevölkerung auf.

Bis zu einem gewissen Grade partizipierten die Kleriker am Ansehen und Sozialprestige der Bischöfe. Generell bestand jedoch ein deutliches Gefälle im Ansehen einerseits der Bischöfe, andererseits der Priester, Diakone und niederen Kleriker. Auch der Klerus unterhalb des Episkopats war keine homogene Schicht. Vielfach wird in den Quellen, wie wir bereits gesehen haben, unter den Klerikern zwischen *iuniores* und *seniores* differenziert, womit auf den Rang, nicht auf das Alter angespielt ist.¹⁵⁸ Die Kleriker waren weder in ihren Vermögensverhältnissen noch hinsichtlich des Sozialprestiges eine einheitliche und homogene Gruppe.

Generell nahm mit der Größe der Gemeinde das Prestige der dort tätigen Geistlichen zu. Auf der untersten Stufe des Ansehens standen die Dorfkleriker. Die Bischöfe behandelten sie herablassend; spanische Kirchenkonzilien des 6. Jh. mußten dem Bischof untersagen, auf seinen Inspektionsreisen von den Priestern in den Landgemeinden Arbeitsdienste zu verlangen und sie wie seine Sklaven zu behandeln.¹⁵⁹

Am ehesten war es noch die Etablierung eines eigenen Gerichtsstandes für Kleriker, der diese von den gewöhnlichen Laien abhob. Aber auch diese Privilegien waren nicht gesichert: Denn tatsächlich wurden Kleriker vielfach der weltlichen Strafgewalt unterworfen, teilweise auch in das Gefängnis geworfen. Die staatlichen Behörden maßten sich in Gallien vielfach die Strafgewalt gegenüber Klerikern an.¹⁶⁰ In einem Fall ließ ein Amsträger einen Archidiakon, dessen Sklaven einen Diebstahl begangen hatten, aus dem sonntäglichen Gottesdienst heraus ins Gefängnis werfen. Der Schutz, den die Kleriker theoretisch vor staatlichen Zwangsmaßnahmen genossen, war sehr fragil.¹⁶¹

Es ist also kaum davon auszugehen, daß die Aufnahme in den Klerus automatisch mit einem deutlichen Gewinn an Ansehen und Prestige verbunden war. Zumindest im 5. Jh. hören wir noch davon, daß Kleriker ihren Dienst aufzugeben

¹⁵⁸ Statuta ecclesiae antiqua, C. 87 (36) (CCL 148, 180); Conc. Epaonense (517 n. Chr.), C. 15 (CCL 148 A, 27f.); Conc. Arelatense (554 n. Chr.), C. 6 (ibid. 172); Conc. Turonense (567 n. Chr.), C. 13 (12) (ibid. 180f.); C. 20 (19) (ibid. 183f.); Conc. Matisconense (581/3 n. Chr.), C. 5 (ibid. 224); C. 8 (ibid. 224f.); Conc. Narbonense (589 n. Chr.), C. 5 (ibid. 255); C. 13 (ibid. 256); Syn. dioec. Autissiodorensis (561/605 n. Chr.), C. 43 (ibid. 270); Conc. Parisiense (614 n. Chr.), C. 6 (4) (ibid. 276).

¹⁵⁹ Synodus Bracarensis II (572 n. Chr.), C. 2 (Vives 81f.); Conc. Tol. III (589 n. Chr.), C. 20 (ibid. 132).

¹⁶⁰ Conc. Matisconense (581/3 n. Chr.), C. 7 (CCL 148 A, 224); Syn. dioec. Autissiodorensis (561/605 n. Chr.), C. 43 (ibid. 270); Conc. Parisiense (614 n. Chr.), C. 6 (4) (ibid. 276); Conc. Parisiense (614 n. Chr.), Edictum Clotarii II, C. 4 (ibid. 283); Conc. Clippiacense (626/7 n. Chr.), C. 7 (ibid. 292f.).

¹⁶¹ Greg. Tur., Franc. 4, 43.

suchten, um statt dessen eine weltliche Karriere zu machen.¹⁶² Und im ausgehenden 6. Jh. mußten die Laien ausdrücklich ermahnt werden, den Geistlichen mit Ehrerbietung zu begegnen. Treffe man unterwegs einen Kleriker, so sollte man sich verbeugen oder, wenn man beritten war, von seinem Pferd absteigen.¹⁶³

Fassen wir zusammen! Die Kleriker waren in Gallien, Hispanien und Italien im 6. Jh. mehrheitlich „kleine Leute“. Vielfach waren sie Bauern, die nur einen kleinen Teil ihrer Zeit auf die geistlichen Aufgaben verwandten. Zwar mochte durch die kaiserliche und kirchliche Gesetzgebung ein *ordo* geschaffen worden sein, tatsächlich hoben sich die Kleriker aber kaum von dem Rest der Gemeinde ab.

Die Präsenz von Klerikern gilt in der Forschung als einer der Faktoren, die die spätantike Stadt gestärkt hätten. Die gallischen und italischen Quellen zeigen, daß dem nicht so sein mußte: Viele Kleriker auch der städtischen Kirchen lebten faktisch auf dem Land. Der Klerus war somit auch völlig untauglich, als städtische Elite zu fungieren und Aufgaben zu übernehmen, wie sie ihm in der Gesetzgebung des Honorius und des Anastasius angetragen wurden. Die soziale wie ökonomische Kluft zwischen Bischof und Klerus war gewaltig. Wenn etwa in Ravenna wirklich jeweils ein Viertel der kirchlichen Einkünfte an den Bischof und den Klerus in seiner Gesamtheit ging, so würde dies bedeuten, daß das Salär, welches der Bischof bezog, mindestens 60mal so groß war wie das durchschnittliche *stipendium* seiner Kleriker. Trotz aller Bemühungen, ihre Interessen auch gegen den eigenen Bischof zu wahren, gelang es den Klerikern doch nicht, im politischen Leben der Städte Italiens und Galliens eine eigenständige Rolle zu spielen.

Dies gilt nicht nur für die in dieser Arbeit im Zentrum stehenden Regionen. Auch in Ägypten waren die Kleriker im 6. Jh. zumeist kleine Leute und wurden in ihrer Mehrzahl aus der Landbevölkerung rekrutiert. Sie genossen augenscheinlich kein besonders hohes gesellschaftliches Ansehen, und es gibt in der papyrologischen Dokumentation demzufolge auch kaum Hinweise darauf, daß sie in den Städten oder auch nur in den Dörfern regelmäßig öffentliche Funktionen wahrgenommen hätten.¹⁶⁴ Es ist bezeichnend, daß die eingangs zitierten, auf Honorius und Anastasius zurückgehenden gesetzlichen Regelungen in der Gesetzgebung Justinians nicht wiederaufgegriffen wurden. Hier werden allenfalls noch dem Bischof, nicht aber dem Klerus unterhalb des Episkopats Aufgaben im öffentlichen Bereich zugewiesen. Die Vorstellung, die Geschichte der Stadt seien nicht nur von den weltlichen Honoratioren, d.h. der Grundbesitzerschicht, sondern auch dem Klerus bestimmt worden, entspricht nicht der gesellschaftlichen Realität des 6. Jahrhunderts.

¹⁶² Conc. Andegavense (453 n. Chr.), C. 7 (CCL 148, 138); Conc. Arelatense sec. (442/506 n. Chr.), C. 25 (ibid. 119); Conc. Turonense (461 n. Chr.), C. 5 (ibid. 145).

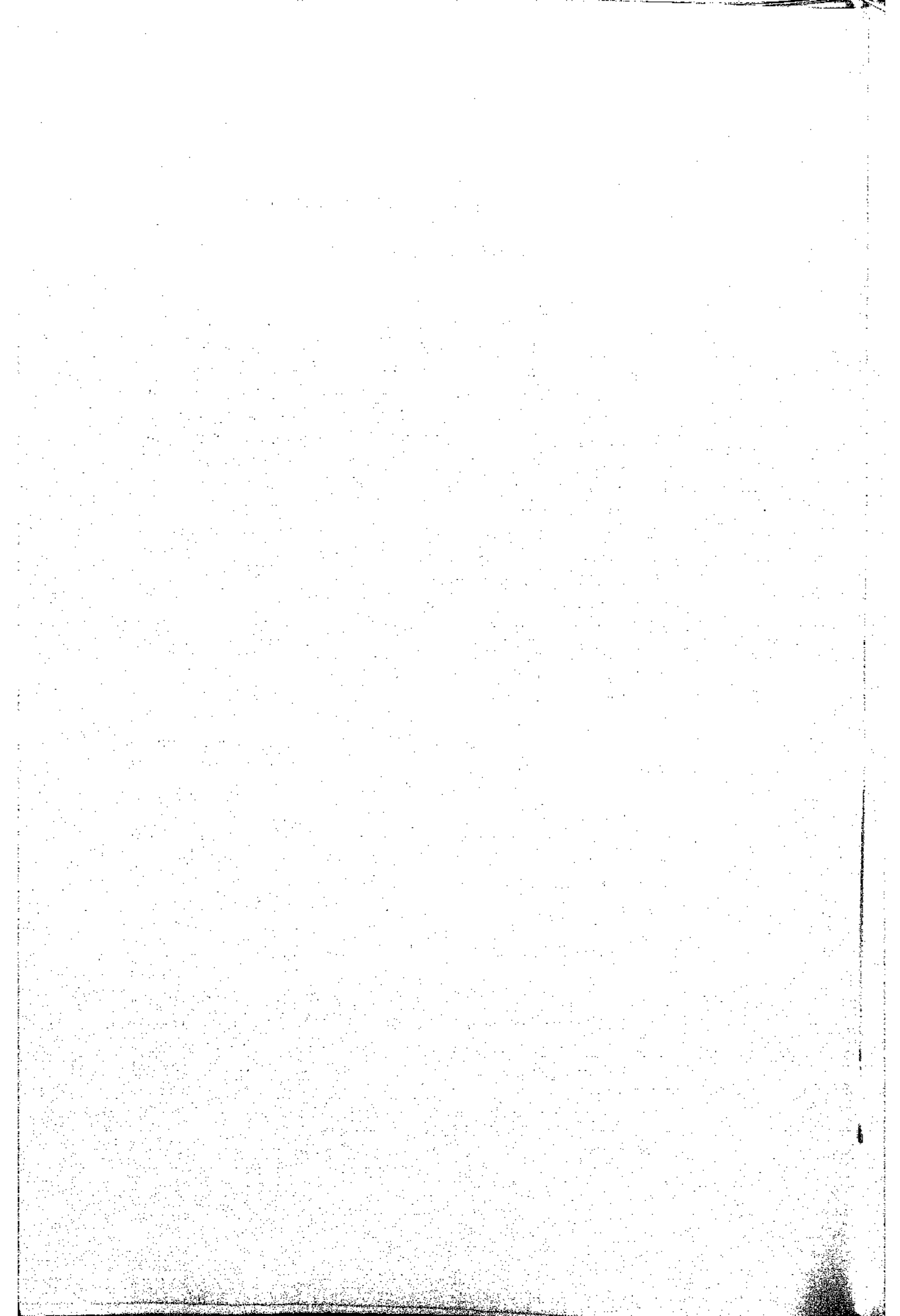
¹⁶³ Conc. Matisconense (585 n. Chr.), C. 15 (CCL 148 A, 246).

¹⁶⁴ Schmelz 2002.

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Factions, Bishops, Violence and Urban Decline

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During the reign of Justinian, an unknown author composed a dialogue between a teacher named Menodorus and his pupil Thomasius which was devoted to constitutional matters, *peri politikēs katastaseōs*; this survives in a somewhat fragmentary state.¹ In one section Thomasius complains that Menodorus has failed to mention a certain system of men, which had also been overlooked by previous writers on the subject even though its destructive force was well known to them; this group has now reached a peak of power and its disastrous energies need to be checked. Menodorus guesses that Thomasius is talking about the military class – an example of elite or intellectual prejudices towards the empire's soldiers who were largely drawn from the rural population, and whose level of 'civility' was probably not much greater than that of the non-Roman recruits who supplemented them in considerable numbers.² Thomasius, however, clarifies that he is referring to the faction colours who are responsible for a kind of civil war which has usually done more harm to cities than any external enemy – the *demos*, divided into its factional colours, is waging war against itself and the rest of the city. Thomasius' words have a strong effect on Menodorus, who vividly portrays the plight of the cities: "as I looked, as if in a painting, at the cities standing in a circle around their mother and queen, in my pity I could not keep from weeping at their sufferings, as they were abused by the citizens and, as it were, described to each other the violence and outrages that occur from internal sources as well as the misfortunes and captures that arrive externally". Quite what solution the author came up with is left unclear by the defective manuscript, but Menodorus initially suggested a combination of tighter controls by fellow citizens as well as education whereas Thomasius opted for some sort of authority which would inculcate moderation.³ Fortunately the nature of the possible solution is of much less importance for my discussion than the emotional picture which is painted of the factions contributing to the destruction of their own cities.

The *Dialogue's* vision of the empire's cities being plagued, and ultimately destroyed, by these entertainment groups accords well with the interpretation of factional violence during the fifth and sixth centuries advanced by Wolf Liebeschuetz in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman City*, as well as in a conference contribution in which the basic ideas on the factions had already been presented.⁴ Surprisingly the *Dialogue* is not cited in either piece; surprising because the

¹ For the remains, see Mazzuchi 1982; discussion in Fotiou 1978.

² Discussion of the 'Romanity' of the army in Whitby 2004.

³ *Dialogue* 100–114 (Mazzuchi 1982 pp. 33–35).

⁴ Liebeschuetz 1998; 2001a.

thoroughness and sensitivity of LIEBESCHUETZ's analyses of the factions have done so much to advance our understanding beyond the significant, but ultimately limiting, thesis of Alan CAMERON, beginning with a *JRS* review of *Circus Factions* over a quarter of a century ago and culminating in *Decline and Fall*.⁵ So, although the purpose of this contribution is to probe away at some of Liebeschuetz's views on the factions, I begin by offering some additional evidence to underpin them – or at least to show that contemporary intellectuals might have approved of his thesis.

Alan CAMERON's work on circus factions undercut earlier theories which had attempted to use religious, social or neighbourhood rivalry to explain the competition between the two main sporting groups of Blues and Greens.⁶ For CAMERON, the factions remained sporting bodies even though in Late Antiquity their enhanced role in imperial ceremonial, as well as a significant increase in their membership as a result of a consolidation of the bodies responsible for different urban entertainments, appeared to give them greater prominence; factional rivalry often provided a distraction from other more serious issues, and the true importance of factions was that they were non-political, with the exception of the occasional disputed succession to the throne when they very briefly acquired wider importance. On this thesis, the factions were no more and no less than the soccer hooligans of late antique cities, a picture which CAMERON claimed was unanimously supported by the relevant sources.⁷ LIEBESCHUETZ's achievement has been to rescue the factions from this minimalist interpretation by demonstrating that (1) their significance was much greater than that of uncontrollable sporting hooligans; (2) patronage was an important factor in determining the behaviour of the factions, most clearly through their actions on behalf of emperors but also for important non-imperial individuals even though the involvement and influence of these slightly lesser people is usually unclear;⁸ (3) religious violence was relevant to the emergence of factional violence, partly through establishing a precedent but also as an example of urban patrons exploiting the physical potential of their networks of clients. Some other major elements of the LIEBESCHUETZ presentation are, to my mind, less compelling, primarily the argument that levels of violence were affected by the decline of local *curiae* and the parallel transition to civic government by small groups of notables, people who are said to be less visible within their communities and so less accessible to quieter forms of communication. Other issues are LIEBESCHUETZ's belief that the factions were regarded with sufficient favour by the mass of their fellow citizens because of their role in publicising common grievances that ordinary citizens would rally in their support, and that the destructive violence of popular disputes, religious as well as factional, made a significant contribution to the decline of the ancient city.

⁵ Liebeschuetz 1978, a perceptive early critique of the views of Cameron 1976. The *Dialogue* is also absent from Cameron 1976.

⁶ See also Cameron 1973.

⁷ For discussion of some evidence which does not fit Cameron's views, see Whitby 1999.

⁸ Cf. also Whitby 1999 for this line of argument.

I will begin with the notion of popular solidarity with the factions,⁹ since there is virtually no evidence for this and we are reduced to subjective hunches. Menodorus, in the *Dialogue* quoted above, appears to have envisaged a division between a city's inhabitants and the factions since he suggested that collective action might be able to keep the factions under control and terminate the violence which was disrupting the lives of the majority of the population. At the least this indicates that the author of the *Dialogue* did not expect there to be strong bonds between the factions and their fellow citizens. As to the attitudes of individuals who came to participate in factional activity, one can cite the autobiographical testimony of the historian Menander (fr. 1.11–17, BLOCKLEY), who relates how he had abandoned the study of law in favour of the passions of the colours; now, although Menander was probably a full member of one of the colours (by the time he composed his *History* he had matured sufficiently not to record which faction he espoused), he appears to have been a casual participant seeking the excitement of transgressive behaviour. His actions were a matter of personal choice and it is difficult to see anything in this to point to wider popular support for factions. The only other individual rioter about whom we have information is Jacob the Jew, the admittedly fictional protagonist in the seventh-century *Dialogue* which goes by his name (*Doctrina Iacobi Nuper Baptizati*):¹⁰ he presents himself as a classic hanger-on who exploited, for his own different ends, the violence initiated by the factions, at Constantinople and Antioch in 609: "When the Greens under Crucis burnt the Mese and committed that evil, again as a Blue I bashed the Christians, insulting them as Greens and calling them city-burners and Manichees. And when at Antioch Bonosus punished and killed the Greens I went to Antioch and, as a Blue and supporter of the emperor, bashed numerous Christians and called them rebels" (*Doctrina* 1.40). There was also an incident on Rhodes where Jacob, again pretending to be a Green, handed over Blues fleeing from the East to the sailmakers who beat them up (*Doctrina* 5.20). On each occasion Jacob was acting in support of the factions' violence, but not because of any sense of obligation towards or fellow-feeling for them.

This evidence on involvement with factions relates to particular persons; the actions of Menander and Jacob are entirely plausible in the light of much better documented occasions of violence in the modern world; and the behaviour of such individuals neither disproves nor proves LIEBESCHUETZ's thesis of popular solidarity for the factions. Some of the population may have been more closely aligned with factional priorities than Jacob the Jew, but the specific evidence does not exist so that inferences have to be drawn from accounts of riots as to the extent of popular participation and the significance of issues underlying the actions. It is, however, unsafe to conclude from mass participation in factional violence, for example during the Nika Riot, that there was any widespread empathy with factional behaviour or a belief that the factions had to be supported since they had the capacity to perform socially useful functions:¹¹ once a riot was

⁹ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 216, 252f.

¹⁰ Text and translation in Dagron/Deroche 1991.

¹¹ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 252.

underway, for whatever reason, casual opportunism would suck in looters, while non-factional grievances and aspirations would attract others, as certainly occurred in the Nika Riot when the scale of violence eventually created such a political challenge that some senators (including relatives of the former Emperor Anastasius) were persuaded that there was an opportunity to oust Justinian.

It is undoubtedly true that factions could, and sometimes did promote popular grievances.¹² The Nika Riot was preceded by a period of chanting, of unknown duration, against the administration of John the Cappadocian; people had come in from outside Constantinople to register complaints, and had teamed up with one of the factions, undoubtedly the Greens whose antipathy to Justinian's regime was well-known (ps.-Zachariah 9.14).¹³ On this occasion there was a popular grievance of general interest in the provinces, even if it may have had lesser resonance within the capital. Under Zeno the Greens were prominent in anti-Jewish riots in Antioch,¹⁴ and clearly shared the prejudices of a significant part of the population. In Alexandria in 515/16 the factions combined to complain about a shortage of oil and bread (Malalas, *Exc. de Insid.* fr. 41 = pp. 328–9, THURN), in 540 the Blues of Cilicia protested against the *dux* Marthanes' expropriations (Procopius, *SH* 29.30), while in 556 both factions were involved in chanting about a bread shortage at Constantinople (Malalas 488.6–14): all these would probably have involved issues of widespread concern. Finally, or at least this is the last occasion recorded by our sources, in 602 the factions were concerned about the actions of Constantine Lardys the logothete and demanded his removal (Theophylact 8.9.5), presumably for an economic reason granted the nature of his official duties.¹⁵ It is also the case that an imperial crisis, in which the factions would have a direct interest, could trigger wider problems: in 559 a rumour that Justinian had died prompted the populace to seize the available bread supplies (Theophanes 234.20–30), so that a social or economic crisis was immediately triggered.

This evidence is the tip of an iceberg whose extent is impossible to determine: the single item of provincial evidence, the behaviour of the Blues in Cilicia, probably points to what has been hidden by the metropolitan focus of our sources, and even in the major cities what may well have been routine involvement by factions in the concerns of their fellow citizens will have been obscured by the fact that only the more violent or spectacular of incidents are reported. However, the probability that much unrest in cities during the fifth and sixth centuries was concerned with economic factors,¹⁶ and that one or both of the factions will

¹² For some of the following instances, see Liebeschuetz 2001a, 217.

¹³ This evidence was missed by Liebeschuetz, since although it might strictly be correct to state that "Nika rioters did not complain about the level of taxation" (2001a, 216), some of them had been complaining about just this issue immediately before the Riot and their grievances were relevant to the successful demands for the removal of the praetorian prefect John.

¹⁴ Malalas 389.15–390.3 (Dindorf), with the extensive supplements from the Slavonic version translated in Jeffreys/Jeffreys/Scott 1986, 218f.

¹⁵ For the logothete, see Haldon 1979, 33f.

¹⁶ For discussion of Rome in a slightly earlier period, see Purcell 1999, 156–159.

naturally have shared, and helped to articulate, whatever views were being expressed, does not demonstrate that there will have been strong bonds of solidarity between the factions and the wider masses. That ordinary people and factions co-operated on issues of mutual interest does not entail that the masses would mobilise in support of a limited factional issue.

The factions had powerful links upwards, and it was surely these connections, far more than any mutual solidarity with the masses, which ensured the continued existence of groups whose actions could be awkward. Patronage by emperors and other members of the elite was a key factor in the prominence of the factions, and the factions were expected to repay the benefits they received.¹⁷ The conflicting expectations are illustrated by Malalas' account of the Constantinople bread protests in 556: on this occasion Justinian punished the Blues since both factions had chanted against the emperor at Constantinople's anniversary games in May, when a Persian ambassador was Justinian's guest (Malalas 488.6–14). This public disruption to imperial diplomacy resulted in the arrest of leading Blues, because they were the people who should have guaranteed Justinian a favourable welcome; the Greens, even though they had probably been more energetic in their protests as long-term antagonists of the emperor, were not targeted since they had not betrayed their obligations as clients. Evagrius connected Justinian's enthusiasm for the Blues with the fright caused by the Nika Riot (4.32); even if the specific linkage is wrong, since Justinian's support for the Blues antedated his accession to the throne, the general principle is valid, that men of power were prepared to make arrangements with the factions in the expectation of personal benefits. Another powerful patron is John the Cappadocian who is said by John Lydus to have courted the Greens, allegedly in connection with his designs on the purple (*de mag.* 3.62); it is likely that John had learned from his discomfiture during the Nika Riot, when Justinian had dismissed him to appease the rioters, and recognised that he could defend his public position better by strengthening his links with a faction. However often factions became involved in popular protests on economic or other issues, they remained relatively small, perhaps quite exclusive, groups whose social links were complex. Most riots will have been fuelled by a variety of factors, for which we have no evidence, but popular support for the factions as useful bodies seems unlikely to have been a significant and regular influence.

Turning to the broader issue of city government one must consider how or whether an imperial take-over of urban public entertainments in the fifth century contributed to a lessened significance of the civic community, and whether a reduction in the visibility of urban controllers stimulated an increase in violence in cities.¹⁸ The issues of the decline of *curiae* and the general vitality of city government is much debated, and there are serious questions about what are the appropriate perspectives and what evidence is significant. It is possible to argue for an optimistic line on continuity of urban leadership,¹⁹ with one particular elite

¹⁷ Whitby 1999.

¹⁸ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 208, 213–14.

¹⁹ Whittow 1990.

group, the *curiales*, being superseded piecemeal by smaller but not essentially different groups of local landowners, among whom the ecclesiastical hierarchy was now prominent. Although this approach has been queried,²⁰ there is consensus on some issues such as the increasing dominance within cities of bishops, who can scarcely be categorised as hidden controllers. Chronology and geography both militate against a close connection between changes in urban control and a rise in factional violence.

With regard to chronology, it is certain that the pace of change in the nature of civic leadership varied from region to region and between cities, although with the general underlying principle that traditional forms probably persisted longest in the most prosperous areas since in such places a broader group of secular landowning magnates had the resources to dominate their cities the longest.²¹ Thus change is likely to have occurred much earlier in the Balkans, where the Gothic wanderings in the 370s and 380s transformed the patterns of rural exploitation,²² than in richer and safer provinces such as Asia or Syria. Evagrius, presumably drawing on information about the situation in Antioch and neighbouring cities, asserted that a reform of tax collecting practices by Anastasius undermined traditional urban society (3.42): "As a result of this, the revenues were greatly reduced and the flower of the cities lapsed: for in former times the nobility were inscribed in the cities' albums, since each city regarded and defined those in the councils as a sort of senate".

It is difficult to link such urban changes with the increase of factional violence. This emergence of the factions can be placed reasonably certainly in the mid to late fifth century, whereas city councils had declined rather earlier in many places while surviving longer in some. Thus at Antioch Malalas records serious bouts of violence involving the factions during Zeno's reign (476–91), before the Anastasian changes to taxation attested by Evagrius were implemented and their gradual consequences had worked through. This rioting is likely to have been influenced by the tensions of Zeno's reign, when Antioch was drawn into Illus' challenge to the emperor,²³ as much as by local factors. The development of factional violence in Constantinople, another city where postulated changes to the curial domination of cities are not relevant, will have affected behaviour in a quasi-imperial city such as Antioch. The earliest reference to a faction riot at Constantinople is in Marcellinus Comes under the year 445: "After popular disorder had arisen in the Hippodrome at Constantinople many people killed each other", a plain statement of fact with no explanation of cause or context. But, when considered in conjunction with the ban on Greens in imperial service which Marcian introduced after his accession in 450 (Malalas 368.13–17; *Chronicon*

²⁰ E.g. by Liebeschuetz 2001b.

²¹ The best overall discussions of urban change across the empire in late antiquity are provided by Ward-Perkins 1998; 2000. See also Lavan 2003 for some aspects of Liebeschuetz's theories about the change in civic leadership.

²² Poulter 1992.

²³ As *magister militum per Orientem* he was based at Antioch from 481 until his defeat outside the city in 484.

Paschale 592.10), it is likely that the relatively recent public demonstration of preference for the Greens by Theodosius (Malalas 351.5–352.7) had affected their standing and behaviour.²⁴

A good reflection of the contrast between the start and end of the fifth century in the significance of factions is provided by the scanty evidence for disturbances at Rome. In the late fourth century, Ammianus in the course of his unflattering portrayal of the Roman aristocracy, refers to the practice of debtors employing the services of charioteers to ward off pressing creditors (28.4.25); similarly charioteers are present along with gladiators and workmen among the supporters of Damasus in the bloody papal election in 366 (*Coll. Avellana* 1.5). The factions are not mentioned, and yet Ammianus regarded the Circus Maximus as the heart and soul of the city (28.4.29).²⁵ Games were important for the legitimisation of new emperors in the city, as for Theodosius in 384 when the provision of imperially-funded entertainments and the erection of a statue to the emperor's father consolidated the relationship;²⁶ these were exactly the type of events in which the factions would subsequently be prominent. Just over a century later Theodoric the Ostrogoth had to attempt to suppress disturbances in which aristocratic and factional rivalries interlocked in a way familiar in the East (Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1.20); Theodoric reproached leading senators, including the consul Inportunus, for the trouble they had been stirring up against the Greens, exhorted the factions, but the Greens in particular, to behave with moderation, and instructed the brothers Albinus and Avienus, both ex-consuls and patricians, to resolve some of the tensions by selecting a new mime dancer for the Greens, whose patrons they were (Cass. *Var.* 1.27, 33).²⁷ At some point during the fifth century the factions at Rome appear to have acquired new responsibilities and significance, but this change cannot be linked to substantial developments in the local aristocracy or the internal organisation of the city: for these the most significant changes came much later, in the mid-sixth century during the Justinianic reconquest when senatorial families suffered heavily and there was no longer the population or money to sustain large-scale public entertainments. During Theodoric's reign the senatorial aristocracy was as visible at Rome as it had been in the late fourth century.

The geographical spread of rioting also merits consideration. Before the early seventh century violence is only attested as erupting in a limited number of cities. Our evidence is focused almost entirely on Antioch and Constantinople because these were the cities inhabited by Malalas and his continuator, whose combined text provides our information for the majority of faction incidents.²⁸ Factional

²⁴ On this development, see further below.

²⁵ Matthews 1989, 419–23. The fact that Damasus was proclaimed at the church of S. Laurence known as *in Prasino*, which is probably a reference to a nearby stable of the Green faction, may well explain the presence of charioteers but does not prove a link with the faction as a group; see Matthews 1989, 422.

²⁶ Lim 1999, 270.

²⁷ Moorhead 1992, 239–40.

²⁸ For discussion of Malalas' background, see Croke 1990; for the contrast between the Antiochene Malalas and the Constantinopolitan continuator of c.565, see Whithy 1991.

rioting was probably much more widespread than our specific information records. For example, during the early 520s Justinian tolerated or even encouraged the spread of violence beyond Constantinople and other major cities in order to overawe possible rivals for the throne; at least in April 527, after being proclaimed co-emperor, Justinian sent "rescripts that those causing riots or murders be punished, that no-one should throw stones or commit murders, but that men should watch the games in good order; and he produced much fear and peace in all the provinces" (*Chronicon Paschale* 617.1-6). But there is simply no evidence from ordinary provincial cities to link factions and changes to civic government, and there was probably considerable variation in local conditions. At a metropolitan level the contrast between Antioch, which experienced several extremely destructive bouts of factional violence, and Alexandria, for which the bread and oil disturbance of 515/16 is a rare record of public action by the city's factions, is worth pursuing. The Antiochene background of Malalas is certainly one factor, but he also preserves the information about the troubles at Alexandria and might have been expected to have noticed incidents of substantial unrest in the empire's third major city.

Urban violence in Alexandria in Late Antiquity has been investigated recently by HAAS, though unfortunately his study does not extend beyond the late fifth century and so scarcely touches on the period when factional violence was prominent elsewhere in the empire. HAAS focuses primarily on the persistent religious violence at Alexandria, which he argues should be understood in the light of shifting balances between different communal groups; although violence represented a failure "in the normal structures of urban conflict resolution", it could also "be seen as a drastic means of restoring the city's stability".²⁹ From this perspective HAAS can claim that the city "had achieved a measure of reintegration" by the late fifth century after a century and a half of disputes relating to the nature of Christ.³⁰ It is undoubtedly correct that intercommunal competition is a useful approach to analysing the dynamics of a city such as Alexandria, but the limited focus of HAAS' discussion leads to some dubious conclusions. Thus, Justinian's Edict which records that the prefect provided 320 *solidi* annually to maintain 36 racehorses (13.15-16) is certainly evidence for the strong interest of the emperor and his representatives in being seen to be involved in important aspects of public entertainment. It cannot, however, serve as proof that the factions and hippodrome were not a source of trouble; HAAS' assertion that financial help would not have been provided to opponents of imperial interests and disturbers of the peace ignores the situation in other major cities.³¹ For example, in 588 Patriarch Gregory secured funds for the hippodrome at Antioch, an action which outraged John of Ephesus (*HE* 5.17) but which probably reflected the bishop's pressing need to rebuild relations with the city's factions who had recently united in opposition to him (Evagrius 6.7).³² For Justinian the patronage

²⁹ Haas 1997, 12f.

³⁰ Haas 1997, 333.

³¹ Haas 1997, 65.

³² See above for the case of John the Cappadocian.

of public entertainments at Alexandria ensured that he received some attention, probably favourable on most occasions, at major secular events in a city where doctrinal rivalries made the Church a less effective propagator of the emperor's image.

Quite how integrated Alexandria was as a city during the sixth century is rather more debatable than HAAS suggests. Apart from tensions caused by attempts by Chalcedonian rulers to impose like-minded bishops on the city, Monophysites were also rent by serious divisions and the Jewish community remained significant.³³ In the context of Heraclius' revolt against Phocas Alexandria experienced political divisions comparable to those in other major eastern cities, with the circus factions being prominent in the conflict, or at least being used as convenient labels to advertise allegiances.³⁴ But, before the early seventh century, Alexandria does not appear to have experienced the type of repeated factional violence which had afflicted Antioch and Constantinople. If one could assume that our sources have not ignored a sequence of major incidents, then an explanation for the distinction between Alexandria and Antioch or other eastern metropolises might be sought in terms of local conditions: perhaps the dynamics of relations between clerical and secular authorities in the city thwarted the sort of patronal exploitation of factions which occurred elsewhere, perhaps the level of religious tension reduced the potential of other issues to generate unrest while the presence of significant imperial forces to maintain order on religious issues ensured stability in other areas, perhaps the nature of the city's links with emperors had not developed self-confidence inside the factions so that the scope for factional initiatives was diminished. All this is speculation, but granted that any outbreak of violence was likely to be shaped by a variety of factors it would be unwise to disregard such issues. Local circumstances were relevant. It is not surprising that there was a period of quiet at Constantinople following the Nika Riot massacre and the reconstruction of the city centre, while at Antioch the devastating earthquakes of 526 and 528 and the Persian sack of 540 are likely to have had a similar impact.

Chronological and geographical considerations offer scant support for the postulated link between the upsurge in factional violence and a decline in the visibility of local controllers. It is also worth unpicking what is meant by the imperialisation of local entertainments,³⁵ since the transfer of funding from curial to central control might not entail a reduced, or less visible, local involvement in events. The annexation by the emperor of local sources of revenue, and then their partial return, during the fourth century is well-known,³⁶ and these changes provide the most likely context for a shift in the funding of games during the fifth century, namely that "some of the old civic revenues had been permanently assigned to the factions for expenditure on the shows".³⁷ This suggestion is very

³³ Detailed discussion in Frend 1972.

³⁴ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 274–276 discusses the evidence of John of Nikiu 107f.

³⁵ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 203–210.

³⁶ Jones 1964; Ward-Perkins 1998.

³⁷ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 205 n. 15.

plausible, but such a change does not explain why locals would have seen the subsequent shows as 'imperialised'. Certainly state intervention had now helped to guarantee that funds would be available, but the monies were still being generated by roughly the same properties which had previously underpinned entertainments, members of the province's leading families would have continued to occupy prominent positions in the audience, and local magnates might still provide top-up contributions as the accounts of the Apion family reveal.³⁸ Such a limited shift would help to explain the prejudiced assertion of Procopius that shows were closed after Justinian seized civic revenues, since the accusation implies that events still drew funds from local sources.³⁹

Alongside the local aristocracy, however, the emperor and the representatives of imperial power, such as the *Comes Orientis* at Antioch or the prefect at Alexandria, were also important factors in any local celebrations. Imperial interest in provincial games and other major gatherings had been signalled by the legislation which provided for the transmission of popular acclamations to the emperor by public post (*Cod. Theod.* 1.16.6),⁴⁰ but this had been in the early fourth century. It is likely that steps were taken in the mid-fifth century to reinforce links with local secular events and to promote the distant emperor's visibility to his people. Malalas records an initiative by Theodosius II in c. 440 which involved first a rearrangement of seating in the Constantinople hippodrome which was designed to ensure that the Green Faction, which was favoured by Theodosius, was directly in the emperor's line of vision, and then the extension of this reorganisation throughout the empire (351.5–352.7).⁴¹ The intention, clearly, was to signal widely the emperor's attention to the Greens, which had consequences for their standing and behaviour, but this change operated on a completely different level from the local interests and influences at play in a particular city's hippodrome. It is indeed possible that the indication of imperial interest in public entertainments might have encouraged local elites to remain more fully engaged with these events,⁴² for fear that absence might disadvantage their reputations centrally as well as locally.

Neither this heightened imperial presence at games, nor changes in the mechanisms for local government need have detracted from the visibility of those responsible for individual cities. The group of secular grandees involved in running local affairs contracted, some of these acquired new titles such as Father of the City, *pater civitatis*, and they were joined by the local bishop, undoubtedly the most important change, but these people were scarcely invisible: they lived in

³⁸ Evidence cited by Liebeschuetz 2001a, 206 nn. 26f.

³⁹ *Secret History* 26.6. The accusation cannot be corroborated and is probably no more reliable than the analagous accusation that the emperor deprived frontier troops of their pay (*SH* 24.12–14).

⁴⁰ Roueché 1984.

⁴¹ For discussion of the significance of this change, see Whitby 1999; also Liebeschuetz 2001a, 207.

⁴² Lim 1999, 270 suggests this for the Roman Senate in the late fourth century: the funding of games by Theodosius encouraged senators to attend, since absence might have been taken as an insult to the new emperor.

the larger houses and occupied prominent positions in local events, including special seating at entertainments as well as in church. They were clear targets, if the desire arose: their marriages might well be occasions for general celebrations, as Evagrius records happened for him at Antioch in October 588 (6.8), and they would be the recipients of the sort of public praise which was lavished on the *clarissimus* Albinus at Aphrodisias where the columns of the portico along the west side of the *agora* preserve a sequence of acclamations:⁴³ "you have disregarded wealth and obtained glory, Albinus *clarissimus*. Albinus *clarissimus*, like your ancestors a lover of your country, may you receive plenty ... with your buildings you have made your the city brilliant; Albinus lover of your country. The whole city, having acclaimed with one voice, says: He who forgets you does not know God." Albinus was not alone at Aphrodisias: Philip had financed the southern portico of the *agora* a generation or so before him, the *pater civitatis* Rhodopaeus received three statues with appropriate appreciation for his benefactions, and the most magnificent Theopompus, probably another Father of his City, received acclamations. The leading men of this city did not keep themselves hidden. The evidence from Aphrodisias is exceptional, but not because there was something unusual about its local life and governance; rather it is the fortunate preservation of a rich corpus of evidence whose late antique elements have received close attention from archaeologists and epigraphers. At Antioch the activities of Mamianus during the reign of Zeno, precisely the time when factional violence first flared up in the city, probably evoked a similar public response: he constructed two colonnaded streets joined by an ornate Tetrastyle, and at suburban Daphne he was responsible for an Antiforum and received a bronze statue (Evagrius 3.28). Mamianus was originally of low status, but had risen to membership of the city council, and it is implausible that he would have permitted his grand benefactions to his city to pass off without commemoration.

The Albinus acclamations link Christianity and popular activities within the city, and provide a convenient hinge to turn the discussion to the issue of religion and violence. Whereas Alan CAMERON had discredited the notion of the factions as religious interest groups, rightly since it is impossible to demonstrate any consistent doctrinal allegiance on their part, LIEBESCHUETZ is also correct to insist that links between religious and factional violence need to be explored.⁴⁴ From the mid-fifth century, or whatever the date of the empire-wide reorganisation of entertainments, the factions were probably the second most powerful structure at both a local level in individual cities and a more general level throughout the empire; the Church was the one organisation which far outstripped them.⁴⁵ On occasions, as with the Laurentian Schism at Rome in 509 and in the anti-Jewish violence in Antioch under Zeno, religious issues were a factor in unrest associated with the factions,⁴⁶ but the fundamental reason for the linkage proposed by

⁴³ The structure of the acclamations has been reconstructed by Roueché 1989, 26–36, nos. 16–20.

⁴⁴ Cameron 1976, ch.6; main discussion at Liebeschuetz 2001a, 257–269.

⁴⁵ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 277.

⁴⁶ The exploitation of factional violence for religious ends attributed to Jacob the Jew (see

LIEBESCHUETZ is the regularity and destructiveness of the violence associated with both these organisations.

At first sight it seems extraordinary that LIEBESCHUETZ can claim that most of our evidence about urban disturbances in Late Antiquity involves the factions, with religious incidents explicitly relegated to a lesser role.⁴⁷ One explanation is the period covered by *Decline and Fall*, the later fifth and sixth centuries when the Chalcedonian dispute was the main cause of religious unrest. As a result the disturbances associated with the homoousian issue are outside the field of comparison, but Athanasius of Alexandria's lifetime of confrontation or the troubles at Constantinople associated with Macedonius' Arianising views cannot be excluded from an overall assessment of unrest in the cities of the later empire. Bishops could mobilise substantial bodies of secular supporters, for example the armworkers and weavers from the imperial factories at Caesarea who defended their bishop Basil from the attentions of a praetorian prefect (Greg. Naz., *Or.* 43.57),⁴⁸ and the consequences might be highly destructive, as at Constantinople when the riots involving supporters of John Chrysostom resulted in the burning of the first church of S. Sophia (Sozomen 8.22).⁴⁹ Campaigns against non-Christians in the later fourth century frequently resulted in fighting, for example the destruction of the Alexandrian Serapaeum by Theophilus or Marcellus of Apamea's attacks on temples in Syria which both involved the deployment of imperial troops on the side of the bishop (Sozomen 7.15). It is essential to remember, again, the extent to which our impression of urban violence during the fifth and sixth centuries is conditioned by the survival of the Malalas nexus of texts, primarily the original *Chronographia* but also the derivative *Chronicon Paschale* and Theophanes. This is a crucial issue, since these sources do present us with a rich picture of urban unrest, but their information may distort our assessment of the balance between this violence and other incidents. There might appear to be less 'religious' destruction in the accounts of the aftermath of Chalcedon in Zachariah of Mitylene and Evagrius than in the narratives of earlier doctrinal disputes, but this could reflect the interest and priorities of the authors.

That said, although there is no instance of religiously-inspired violence to rival the Nika Riot or the conflict between Phocas and Heraclius, there were some very serious incidents in the fifth and sixth centuries. In terms of threats to the stability of the emperor, the Trisagion rioting of November 512, which was the culmination of a long period of tension between Patriarch Macedonius, who supported the Council of Chalcedon, and Emperor Anastasius who was opposed, came close to unseating the emperor: rioters had gone to the house of Areobindus, husband of Anicia Juliana whose relatives included western emperors and who was one of the leading proponents of Chalcedon in the capital, in an attempt to

above) is rather different since, although one can probably assume that Jacob accurately represents the way in which a violent episode sucked in numerous opportunists, his individual initiative did not tie whichever faction he happened to join to a religious cause.

⁴⁷ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 249.

⁴⁸ For analysis of the growth in episcopal power, see Brown 1988, ch.3.

⁴⁹ For the context, see Liebeschuetz 1990 ch.17-21.

proclaim him emperor, and Anastasius had only quelled the disturbances by appearing in the Hippodrome without his crown and offering to resign the throne (Malalas 406.22–408.11). The combination of rival proclamation and public appearance of a humbled emperor parallels Justinian's position on the final day of the Nika Riot. It is noticeable that the full extent of this incident is preserved in a chronicle, whereas Evagrius (3.44) omits some significant aspects. Outside Constantinople Alexandria was repeatedly disrupted by the consequences of the deposition at Chalcedon of Patriarch Dioscorus, with the position of those willing to accept or tolerate the Council dependent on the presence of military support; in 457 the Chalcedonian bishop Proterius was dragged from his church and killed, with his corpse being subjected to public humiliation (Evagrius 2.8). At Antioch the Patriarch Stephen was murdered by his own clergy in 479 during a festival to the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste (Malalas 381.2–7), a confrontation between the patriarch Flavian's supporters and hostile monks left innumerable corpses in the river Orontes (Evagrius 3.32), and the level of physical intimidation involved in ecclesiastical business is illustrated by Aurelian of Epiphania's decision to pretend to be a woman in order to protect himself while delivering a document of anathema to Severus of Antioch (Evagrius 3.34). The trial at Constantinople of pagans caught during the eastern 'witch hunt' in 578 resulted in a riot which threatened the patriarchal palace and the prefect's *praetorium* and ransacked the Palace of Placidia, where proceedings had been held; John of Ephesus (*HE* 3.30–31) records substantially more information about the destruction than Evagrius (5.18).

In many respects the powerful cleric surrounded by gangs of supporters is little different from the secular magnate whose role as patron of various groups, perhaps including a faction, provided him with physical protection; as a result the mechanics of the violence generated by the respective supporters may have been similar. Involvement of emperors might offer another link between religious and factional disturbances, since imperial dealings with patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople, and especially the imposition of bishops of the emperor's own doctrinal persuasion, repeatedly led to violence in these cities: one side in a dispute could hope to receive indulgence for their behaviour (as an imperially-favoured faction might do), while their opponents, especially if they were in a majority as with the Monophysites in and around Alexandria, would rely on physical pressure to maintain their local prominence. Rivalry for imperial power was identified by LIEBESCHUETZ as a key issue for the spread of factional unrest with allegiance to rival emperors serving to foment violence in provincial cities.⁵⁰ This might resemble trouble caused by support for rival bishops, especially situations where one bishop received imperial backing, but it is in fact difficult to substantiate a widespread linkage of factions and imperial competition before the early seventh century when Emperor Phocas was supported by the Blues and his challenger Heraclius by the Greens.⁵¹ Justinian's drive for imperial

⁵⁰ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 214.

⁵¹ Cameron 1976, 284f. questioned the consistency of these factional attachments to Phocas and Heraclius, but see Whitby 1999, 244 with 250 n.70 for discussion of his analysis.

power in the 520s might appear to be an earlier occasion, but while the Blues exploited the licence for disruption provided by the protection of the potential heir to the throne it is unclear that the Greens had an alternative candidate as a focus for their activities. The absence of rival imperial champions, apart from the exceptional circumstances of 609–10, reduces the suggested resemblance to the disturbances of episcopal competition; these had occurred even before Constantine's conversion, but were made more significant by imperial patronage for Christianity.

LIEBESCHUETZ proposed various factors which distinguished religious violence from other forms of urban violence, namely the existence of specific non-secular goals and targets, the significance of rural input, and on occasions the appearance of a town/country split in allegiances.⁵² I would suggest in addition that the overall levels of violence and the significance of who and what was targeted might also be different. Faction riots have the reputation for causing substantial damage, but we must be cautious about the distorting influence of the Nika Riot, which is by far the best-recorded as well as the most destructive particular faction incident. Even during the Nika Riot some of the damage was caused by imperial troops while they struggled to regain control of the capital: on the penultimate day of the riot, it was the soldiers who set fire to the Octagon which led to considerable destruction along the Mese (*Chronicon Paschale* 623.2–9). It might seem implausible to raise the possibility that factional riots were often of limited impact. The first targets, however, were usually members of the opposing faction (e.g. Theophanes 235.29–236.16), or troops responsible for policing them (Malalas. *Exc. de Insid.* 175.29–176.19). When violence was directed against property rather than persons, the structures were often either directly associated with entertainment, for example the hippodrome itself or buildings connected with the other faction (Theophanes 236.2–9), or, more occasionally, with the urban authority, the *praetorium* of the prefect or his private residence (Malalas 491.5–7); destruction such as that in 562 when Blues crossed from Sycae and burned warehouses along the shore (Malalas 490.23–491.3) is rare, and was either opportunistic or occasioned by specific factors beyond our knowledge. By contrast religious rioting often involved people of much higher social standing than any faction riot, since bishops might be among the victims: Proterius of Alexandria was ripped in pieces after being dragged from the baptistery of his church during Easter celebrations (Evagrius 2.8). Bishops were also undoubtedly among the instigators: Memnon of Ephesus organised the demonstrations which ensured that the First Council of Ephesus decided in accordance with the wishes of Cyril, while the activities of Dioscorus at Second Ephesus were notoriously exposed at Chalcedon. Whereas secular patrons, for example Justinian in the 520s, tolerated factional violence and might protect the perpetrators from retribution, they do not appear to have played the prominent role of church leaders who might become more directly engaged in proceedings.

For the author of the anonymous *Dialogue* with which I began, the empire's cities were being destroyed by factional rioting along with external threats;

⁵² Liebeschuetz 2001a, 258.

LIEBESCHUETZ would add religious violence to this assessment, so that physical destruction becomes a key aspect in urban decline.⁵³ This judgement, however, seems to allocate excessive importance to the question of urban fabric, since buildings, although important, were only one aspect of cities; people were much more significant. Even the most destructive of riots could not rival the damage caused by natural disasters and warfare. To take the case of Antioch, one of the more active cities in terms of internally-generated violence, a fire in October 525 was sufficiently serious to trigger an imperial gift of 200 pounds of gold (Malalas 417.9–19), but far worse was to come: the earthquake of May 526 caused massive destruction, with a casualty toll of 250,000 since the city was crowded with visitors for a festival (Malalas 419.5–421.21), for the next 18 months there were aftershocks, and in November 528 there was another major quake with casualties of 4,870 (Theophanes 177.31–2). The city's inhabitants were sufficiently distressed to change Antioch's name to Theopolis (Malalas 443.16–22), but this did not preserve it from Khusro's attack in 540, when the Persians burnt almost the entire city and carried off into captivity those inhabitants who had not fled before the siege or perished in the assault (Procopius, *Wars* 2.8–10). Thereafter successive visitations of plague will have culled the population, and a further earthquake in October 588 levelled parts of the city and killed 60,000 (Evagrius 6.8). These last casualties, however, do illustrate the ability of a major city to recover even from a sequence of catastrophes as massive as those of the years 525–540, and Antioch continued to exist as a significant urban centre into the Islamic period following two phases of enemy invasion and hostile take-over, first by the Persians and then by the Arabs. Constantinople was not so spectacularly unfortunate, but in the great fire of 464 (Evagrius 2.13) more of the city was destroyed than during the Nika riot; there were also major earthquakes in 447, 478, 554, and 557 as well as the outbreaks of plague from 542 onwards which overall caused more casualties and destruction than faction incidents. Natural disasters were an unavoidable element of urban history, and it might seem reasonable to accord the human agents responsible for factional violence a disproportionate share of the blame for urban decline because their unnecessary supplementary destruction may have prevented cities from recovering fully from the inevitable natural events, but the difference in the scale of loss is striking nonetheless.

These catalogues of disasters point to the resilience of the leading eastern cities, and other places such as Amida and Edessa would tell the same story. At least through to the end of the sixth century emperors, supplemented as necessary and where possible by the Church and leading citizens, had the resources to repair or rebuild the centres of cities, especially those which played a major role in the administration of the empire. There may have been a fair amount of patching with materials cannibalised from structures now deemed supernumerary, and full reinstatement may have been slow (e.g. Evagrius 6.8 for the dome of the Great Church at Antioch being propped up by timbers), but the efforts to rebuild show that some cities still preserved an internal vitality. New inhabitants were also available. All substantial cities in antiquity depended upon a regular inflow of

⁵³ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 247–249.

people from their rural hinterland, or the provinces in the case of a capital city, simply to sustain their population. An earthquake or similar disaster increased the need for replacements, but at least until the bubonic plague of the 540s in most parts of the eastern empire outside the Balkans population levels in the countryside seem to have been sufficiently healthy to meet demand from the more important places such as provincial capitals and the great metropoleis. Lesser cities are likely to have suffered, or those which found themselves eclipsed by a greater local attraction. One example is Nicomedia which never recovered its prosperity after the earthquake of 358 (Ammianus 17.7; 22.9.4), probably because its need for new population and buildings coincided with significant developments at nearby Constantinople. These vulnerable cities are unlikely to have possessed either the population resources to generate a very destructive secular riot or perhaps even the ecclesiastical significance to occasion a religious one. The cities most at risk from factional and religious disturbances were precisely those with the best chances of recovery from any sort of destruction, natural, secular or religious.

Consideration of religious violence leads me to LIEBESCHUETZ's thesis that the adoption of Christianity contributed to the disintegration of the classical *polis*-centred world view. LIEBESCHUETZ urges that Christianity had no doctrine of secular citizenship, and introduced violent divisions between orthodox and heretics in individual communities. Thus, whereas at a national level it could underpin communal action within the Christian state and focus loyalties on the emperor as God's representative on earth, at a local level it eroded the cohesion of communities. Even the rise of local cults – icons, saints, sanctuaries – is presented as irrelevant, at least in the East since the allegiances fostered in this way were "unpolitical", "no substitute for the old concept of city as the common interest of its citizen".⁵⁴

These negative judgements deserve to be challenged, since, whatever view one takes about the chronology and significance of the decline of the traditional governing class of the classical city,⁵⁵ there is no doubt that cities with a broadly classical look under the control of local notables survived more strongly and longer in the eastern Mediterranean where the impact of Christianity was more intense. The notion that Christian devotion in the East did not foster political attachments might be investigated, since the strength of the East/West contrast in this respect is unclear. In the West it is accepted that bishops retained considerable control over monasteries and the cult of saints, with the result that the benefits from these sources of religious power could be channelled into cities, but this may also have been true of much of the East. The dichotomy can only be preserved by privileging a certain number of exceptional eastern individuals, the Peter BROWN model of the Holy Man, and contrasting these with the much more episcopal-centred evidence from the West, for example Symeon Stylites with

⁵⁴ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 247f.; for some important reservations, see Lavan 2003.

⁵⁵ Whitton 1990 challenged the orthodoxy on urban decline by arguing for continuity in some areas through into the eighth century.

Gregory of Tours.⁵⁶ But even the great Symeon was not portrayed only as the wild man of God unfettered by ecclesiastical structures, since other stories were told: Theodoret of Cyrrhus stressed his subordination to episcopal authority, and Evagrius also recorded a story to illustrate his obedience to the commands of other monks (1.13). These stories may indeed have been propagated to reduce the impact of his maverick independence, but whatever the truth of his behaviour while alive his relics were appropriated by the Patriarch Martyrius of Antioch as a talisman for his own city and then shared with the emperor Leo.

For the East one can gather stories which show bishops acting as the focus for communal political activity. The corpus of miracles attributed to S. Demetrius would be one important plank, since here we have texts composed by bishops which demonstrate how the urban Church organised the survival of its community, persuaded its richer members to make contributions, and, if necessary, opposed the demands of the imperial centre.⁵⁷ The Church at Thessalonica, of course, had a long tradition of such action: Malchus records how in 479 the inhabitants turned to their bishop to protect them when they believed that Emperor Zeno was about to billet a Gothic army in their city (Malchus 20.1–19). At Asemus in 594 a small-town bishop played a comparable role in upholding his city's safety (Theophylact 7.3). In 540 Bishop Thomas of Apamea prepared his flock for the arrival of Khusro's destructive Persian army by organising a succession of displays of the city's precious relic of the Holy Cross: from the account in Evagrius (4.26), who as a young boy was brought in to witness the event, it is clear that the displays were intended for the benefit of the whole civic community. In the East cities survived as political institutions in larger numbers for significantly longer than in the West, and, although secular considerations such as the greater regional prosperity are relevant, the Church is likely to have made a positive contribution.⁵⁸

It is true that doctrinal divisions and other religious rivalries were very destructive, to particular communities and on occasion to whole cities; its dissensions could even distract troops from major campaigns, as for example in 549 when a relief expedition en route to Italy was detained at Ulpiana to quell religious disputes (Procopius 8.25.13). But it is difficult to align the widespread acceptance of Christianity and then its institutionalisation with broad changes in urban prosperity and vitality. Thus, whereas it is arguable that "politically motivated civic munificence was largely replaced by Christian charity",⁵⁹ the change does not represent cause and effect since the competitive munificence which had underpinned urban life in the early empire declined during the third century, too early for widespread charity to have had a substantial impact: religious giving may have moved into a vacuum created by the decline of its secular counterpart, but it did not drive it out. If one considers the broad sweep of urban history in the Roman empire, the most decisive change for cities was not the coming of

⁵⁶ Brown 1971 for the Holy Man; id. 1981 for saints' cults.

⁵⁷ Lemerle 1979; Cormack 1985, ch. 2; Whitby 1998.

⁵⁸ Cf. Lavan 2003.

⁵⁹ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 174, following Patlagean 1977, 181–196.

Christianity but the universal extension of citizenship. Whereas down to the end of the second century the city provided the focus for most public activity for most of the empire's upper classes, and hence for most of their public spending, Caracalla's citizenship law diluted the importance of the local at the expense of the imperial. In the East this was underlined when the growth of the new senate and imperial bureaucracy at Constantinople provided clear targets for elite ambitions,⁶⁰ while in other parts of the empire military insecurity challenged the rural prosperity on which cities depended.

Provincial capitals tended to maintain their vitality, thanks to the presence of lucrative administrative positions and imperial connections, while in other cities decline was usually swifter. What Christianity could offer in these circumstances was the creation of a strong local object for loyalties and expenditure, for example the dedications mentioned in the *Miracula* of Demetrius. The bishop became one of the key individuals in the local political community, the one whose spending power contributed to the maintenance of a range of traditional urban functions, perhaps, as with Gregory of Antioch's funding for a hippodrome, even the secular entertainments which had once been the target of Christian polemic (e.g. Tertullian *de Spectaculis*).⁶¹ The bishop's role was so crucial that in 601 Emperor Maurice felt obliged to ask Pope Gregory for permission to intervene at Justiniana Prima to replace a demented incumbent lest the security of the city was endangered (Greg. *Reg.* 11.29). We inevitably hear more about the festivals and bishops of the larger and more prosperous cities, but the potential benefits of Christianity were appreciated at village and small town level: Theodoret of Cyrrhus records how the corpse of the holy man Maron was stolen from a village by a larger neighbour which subsequently received the profits from the annual festival in his honour (*Historia Religiosa* 16.4), an example of Christianity's ability to underpin secular activities.

The anonymous text with which I began painted a bleak picture of the position of the empire's cities, and it is to this that I wish to return in assessing the significance of violence in the late empire. Factional violence could be extreme, but it was undoubtedly worst at times of imperial instability or uncertainty – as the events of the early seventh century reveal. But one might wonder if there would have been less destruction and death if competition for imperial power had been pursued in the more traditional way adopted, for example, by Septimius Severus and Pescennius Niger, or Magnentius and Constantius II. The *Dialogue* between Thomasius and Menodorus is a product of the late Roman literary efflorescence investigated by LIEBESCHUETZ in *Decline and Fall*.⁶² It was composed during Justinian's reign, quite possibly early in his reign when it would reflect the role of the factions in helping Justinian secure the throne for himself, a process which was violent and unsettling for those involved, but which might have defused the possibility of a full-blown civil war. Factions offer an easy target, for ancient and modern commentators alike, but they might deserve to be

⁶⁰ Heather 1994; 1998; Ward-Perkins 1998, 373–382.

⁶¹ Brown 1988, ch. 3; Liebeschuetz 2000, 208f.

⁶² Liebeschuetz 2001a, ch. 7.

viewed more positively as an important mechanism (along with the Church) for the maintenance of imperial authority in the provinces: there the increasing power of local elites could challenge imperial authority,⁶³ which raised the spectre of the emergence in the East of the local warlords who had highlighted the decline of the power of western emperors. Inevitably the factions' role in the structures of power encouraged them on occasions to take initiatives which might have devastating consequences, but the respectability which was argued by CAMERON to have arrived for them in the seventh century was already there in essence in the sixth.⁶⁴

The nature of urban communities had changed over the centuries, but their communal organisation did not necessarily disappear. Religious change did undermine aspects of the traditional functioning of cities, but also contributed in other respects to their survival. Christianity came at a price, but in terms of urban survival the price was worth paying since successful ecclesiastical cities acquired a powerful new focus for collective action. It is undoubtedly easier to argue the case for Christianity's positive contribution to the strength, including the urban vitality, of the late Roman empire than to do so for the circus factions, but I would like to suggest some similarities. The factions were tolerated because their advantages to emperors and other important patrons significantly outweighed their disadvantages.

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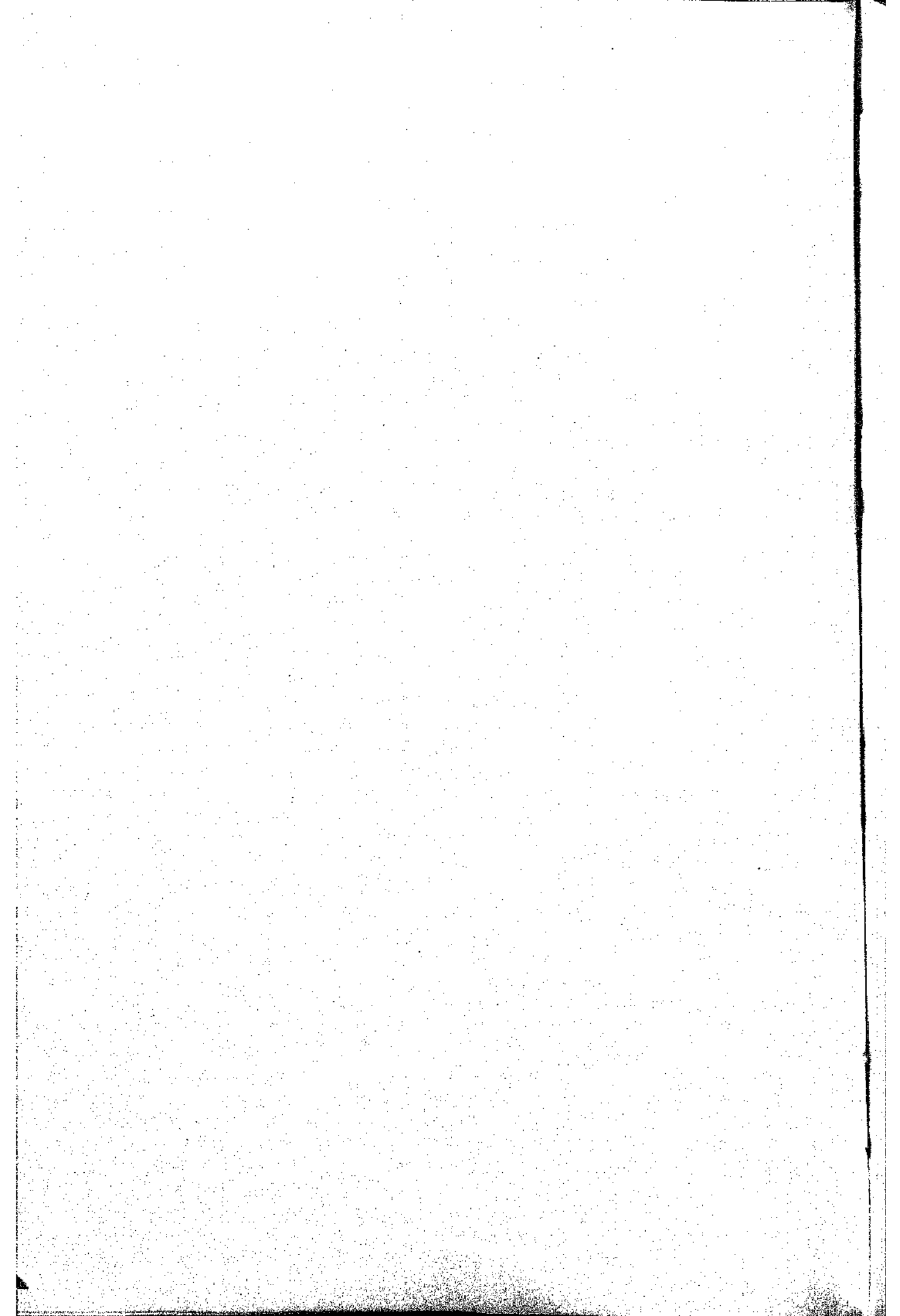
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⁶³ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 278–282; Feissel/Kaygusuz 1985.

⁶⁴ Cameron 1976, ch. 11.

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Transformation and Decline: Are the Two Really Incompatible?

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By the mid third century the classical city was under pressure everywhere. Instead of individuals being eager for the honour of membership in the city council, many existing councillors now sought to escape from the *curia*. The imperial government issued a stream of legislation to prevent existing councillors from leaving. There was fear of invasion and cities all over the Empire, some sooner, some later,¹ received fortifications.² In many cities in many regions, particularly in the West, the new walls enclosed a smaller area than that which had been covered by the classical city. Christianity became first the religion of the emperor, then of the Empire, and in time the appearance of cities came to be dominated by churches. The bishop became more important than any secular local official. These were important and fundamental changes which did not happen everywhere at the same time, but eventually did happen everywhere. When, and why they happened, and how radically they affected the character of the cities was discussed at the conference, and is the subject of this book. Underlying much of the discussion is the question of how far and in what sense the concept of *decline*, which was memorably linked to the history of the fall of the Roman Empire by Edward GIBBON in the title of his book, remains useful to day.³

The Evidence of Inscriptions and Papyri

Reconstruction of any history must start with an evaluation of the evidence. From this point of view Christian WITSCHÉL's chapter on the 'epigraphic habit' is basic.⁴ Much of our knowledge of the functioning of the classical city is derived from inscriptions. But, as WITSCHÉL's discussion of late Roman inscriptions in the province of *Venetia et Histria* shows, the third century saw a transformation of the character of epigraphic commemoration. Inscriptions continue, less abundantly than previously, but still, as is demonstrated in an appendix to the chapter, in very considerable numbers.⁵ But at the same time inscriptions now provide us

¹ The date of Late Antique fortifications is in many cases still quite uncertain.

² In the East: Crow 2001; Gallic walls: Loseby above 75–80.

³ My views on this question: Liebeschuetz 2001a, 1–11; 2001b; 2003. They have been criticised, most fully in Cameron 2003; Whitton 2003.

⁴ See above 359–411.

⁵ See above 382.

with very little evidence on municipal careers and municipal institutions. They continue to throw some light on the activities of provincial governors, but above all they become a principal source of evidence for the progress of Christianity.⁶ More or less⁷ the same transformation can be observed at more or less the same time in most regions⁸ of the Empire. The interpretation of the change in the use of inscriptions is therefore of fundamental importance, as it must affect our view of civic development all over the Empire.

The great question is whether the change in the epigraphic habit represents a profound change in the political culture of the cities (as I argued in my book),⁹ or whether it should be seen as something more superficial, that is as the adoption by the leaders of civic society of new fashions to satisfy their continuing need for self-representation.¹⁰ At this point it is perhaps relevant to ask whether the concept of self-representation provides an adequate description of the use of inscriptions in the classical city. Yes, the setting up of an inscription was an act of self-representation by the individual or the group that had itself commemorated but it was also an act of communication with fellow citizens, and we must not ignore what was being communicated and where.¹¹

Peter VAN MINNEN raises similar problems in connection with the Egyptian papyrological evidence. On the basis of a comprehensive survey of the papyrus documentation that has come down to us from Late Antiquity he shows that there is great variation both in the number and the character of documents surviving from different centuries.¹² Numerous civic documents have reached us from the third and fourth centuries, but much fewer from the fifth and sixth centuries. The fifth century has left us altogether far fewer papyri than either the fourth or the sixth. Of the papyri of the sixth century a disproportionate number are derived from the estate of the Apion family. Before proceeding to reconstruct the development of late Roman cities it is therefore necessary to assess whether a change in the papyrological evidence does indeed reflect changes in Egyptian society, or whether it is only a result of the accidents of survival.

⁶ See above 375–380.

⁷ The imprecise language is deliberate. The reader of this volume cannot fail to observe considerable regional and chronological differences, but to my mind the similarities are much more striking than the differences.

⁸ The most striking exception is Africa, where the epigraphic habit in its classical form revived in the fourth century and persisted to the end of the century and even a little beyond, cf. the abundant material in Lepelley 1981.

⁹ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 11–19.

¹⁰ For the model of a new 'Selbstdarstellungsbedürfnis', see above 373–375.

¹¹ A milestone, for example, does not communicate the same message as a career inscription, and it does make a significant difference whether a member of the élite chooses to present himself to the general public as one who has done the community some service, or as a wearer of expensive clothing.

¹² See above 153–179.

The Cities Transformed

In Gaul cities lost much of their classical monumentality as early as the third or fourth centuries. But Simon LOSEBY has shown us that the city remained a fundamental organising principle in Gaul even under the Merovingians.¹³ For the Merovingian kingdom was an association of *civitates* under a royal administration rather than a unitary kingdom. In Late Antiquity the number of cities actually increased, because, as Jean GUYON reminds us, a number of settlements that had been *vici* received bishops, and thus became cities.¹⁴ But there had been much change too. The urbanised centres were much smaller in area, and more untidy in lay-out, and they had fewer inhabitants. Walls, which might well be monumental, enclosed an episcopal complex, a few churches and the residence of the count, and often did not leave very much room for ordinary housing. Outside the walls were funerary basilicas, and monasteries. The importance of suburbs clearly varied from city to city, but archaeological evidence is still quite insufficient to form a picture of the extent of habitation beyond the wall except for a few cities.¹⁵ Furthermore the Frankish magnates, like the late Roman magnates whom they succeeded, and with whom they eventually came to form a single class, were countrymen who spent most of their lives on their estates, and not in cities.¹⁶ They were important, but our literary sources – being mainly ecclesiastical – tell us very little about them.¹⁷ GUYON, like MARROU before him, characterises the process as change rather than decline, but he has adopted MARROU's maritime metaphor, of ebb-tide (*étiage*), to describe the condition of the Gallic cities in Late Antiquity.

Incidentally I wonder whether by seeing these changes simply in terms of the survival and transformation of the classical city, we miss something specifically Gallic, in that the Gallic *civitas* with an urban centre remained an important administrative institution in Merovingian Gaul,¹⁸ as it did not, or not nearly to the same extent, in Italy or Hispania.¹⁹ Hispania lies next to Gaul and invites comparison. But this is more difficult than appears at first sight because we know so much less about Hispania, and generalisations about it are much more uncertain. One might expect the development in Spain to be similar to that in Gaul, and to some extent this is true. But perhaps the differences are more interesting. In Hispania the monumental structures of the classical city seems to have gone into decline considerably later than has long been assumed, and perhaps a century later than in Gaul. The real decline seems to have been a feature of the fifth century, at least in the larger cities, as Michael KULIKOWSKI demonstrates.²⁰

¹³ See above 67–104, also Loseby 2000.

¹⁴ See above 106f.

¹⁵ See Loseby above 78f.

¹⁶ The extent of ruralisation of the leaders of society in Gaul remains a problem.

¹⁷ On the secular elite, see Loseby above 86–92.

¹⁸ See Loseby above 84–86.

¹⁹ The process of disintegration of the city-territories of the Roman age happened in Gaul too, but more slowly. See Fixot 2000 and Gauthier 2000.

²⁰ See above 129–149; cf. also Arce 2004.

Bishops of course came to be extremely important in Visigothic Hispania, but the Christianisation of town centres was again a comparatively late (i.e. 5th-century) phenomenon.²¹ Eventually there were 82 bishops, each based in a city, and they played an even more direct part in the administration of the Visigothic kingdom than their colleagues played in Merovingian Gaul. On the other hand the Hispanic bishops we know best, those of Mérida, were unlike many bishops of Merovingian Gaul in that they were not descendants of the Roman senatorial nobility. The Visigothic monarchy instituted an administration that was very Roman; at least that is the impression given by the Visigothic Code of Laws, but these laws are very rarely concerned with cities. To judge by the area enclosed by Hispanic circuits of late Roman walls, cities of Hispania with a few exceptions were even smaller than those of late Roman Gaul.²² Moreover the evidence suggests that cities continued to shrink throughout the Visigothic period.²³

It is likely that the role of the *civitates* in Visigothic Spain was less important than it was in Merovingian Gaul, and that the king's direct relation with great landowners was more important.²⁴ The huge late Roman villas were perhaps an alternative to the cities.²⁵ In many respects, notably law, administration and epigraphy, Visigothic Spain remained very Roman. But while the bishops of Merovingian Gaul produced a rich Christian literature of sermons, letters, lives of saints, and of course the remarkable writings of Gregory of Tours, Spanish bishops have left very few writings of this kind. But then again, very few writings have reached us from classical Spain.²⁶

In Italy the classical ideal of the city lasted longer than in the provinces further west: during the fourth century many cities preserved their monumental centres. Conservation of civic centres became difficult during the troubles of the fifth century, but the *curiae* nevertheless continued to take a leading part in government, right up to the middle of the sixth century, and in some cases even beyond. Money was no longer spent on new monumental secular building; but it was still spent in large amounts on churches.²⁷ Giovanni CECONI examines the interaction of civic and imperial administration and concludes that the view which has been generally accepted in the past, and indeed maintained by myself, – namely that the presence of imperial officials made the work of *curiales* and civic magistrates unattractive and hazardous, and by producing a flight from the

²¹ See above 140f.

²² Fernández Ochoa/Morillo 1991 and 1992.

²³ See Keay 2003, esp. 203–206 on the transformation of late Roman townscapes. At Tarragona much of the lower city was abandoned in the late 4th century; see Carreté/Keay/Millett 1995, 36. In Catalonia of 20 urban sites only 4 (Tarraco, Barcino, Ilerda, Girona) can be proved to have continuity into the Middle Ages, 6 others recovered urban life, but only after having been reduced to the condition of a village (Ampurias, Baetulo, Egara, Roses, Dertosa, Iluro). On the fate of cities in general, see Gurt 2000/01.

²⁴ Díaz 2000; see also Ripoll/Velázquez 1999 and Keay 2003, 206–209.

²⁵ For recent work on villas (including villas in Hispania) see Chavarría/Lewit 2004.

²⁶ The classical Latin authors from Hispania, notably the two Senecas and Martial, seem to have written the works we know at Rome.

²⁷ Ward-Perkins 1984.

councils, fatally damaged both *curiae* and cities – can be shown to be wrong for at least some cities in Italy, where the presence or proximity of a governor actually assisted the efforts of the city's *curiales*, so that the city and its *curia* benefited from his presence. Federico MARAZZI shows how Capua and Canusium actually benefited from becoming provincial capitals. Milan and Ravenna expanded as a result of being residences of the emperor. Aquileia and many regions of northern Italy benefited from the shift of the centre of the imperial government to the north.²⁸ It cannot therefore be said that the closeness of agents of the central administration inevitably resulted in the decline of the cities. Nor is it true that Christianisation of cities necessarily led to the replacement of secular by ecclesiastical administration. By founding churches and monasteries secular magnates could actually strengthen their authority.

Cecconi argues that the *honorati* whom we find increasingly in charge of cities from the fifth century onward were for the most part *curiales* who had performed their curial duties before acquiring senatorial rank and subsequently returned to the *curiae* and the service of their cities.²⁹ On this view there was no split in the civic elite, and no significant difference either in outlook or in effectiveness between curial and post-curial government. Cecconi concludes that the system of municipal government remained stable until the calamities of Justinian's war of liberation in the mid-sixth century, when cities and imperial administration failed together. This interpretation leaves scope for discussion.³⁰

In a book that has become a classic Claude LEPOLLEY has shown how in Africa the classical government of cities by *curiales*, together with inscribed monuments, and well-maintained or even newly constructed civic buildings, survived the crisis of the third century better and longer than anywhere else in the West, indeed up to the first decade of the 5th century.³¹ One aspect of this was that at Carthage the games, above all chariot racing and wild beast hunts, continued to be held in the hippodrome and the amphitheatre even after the Vandal conquest, right through the fifth century and beyond, long after they had ceased in most of the cities in the West, though their organisation was in some ways peculiarly African.³² The Vandal invasion caused many members of the elite to lose their land to the invaders. No doubt other changes followed too, including perhaps the slow beginning of the decline of cities. But since the classical epigraphic habit had largely come to an end even in Africa by the second quarter of the fifth century, we really still know very little about the chronology of the decline. For instance very many ruins of churches have survived from Roman North Africa, which might tell us a lot about the Christianisation of North Africa, as well as about its rapid reversal, if only more of the churches could be dated.³³

²⁸ See above 33–65, 285–318.

²⁹ See above 301.

³⁰ See below 470–472.

³¹ Lepolley 1979/81, cf. also Lepolley 2001.

³² See Beschtaouch 1977.

³³ See Mattingly/Hitchner 1995, esp. 209–213 on Africa in Late Antiquity.

In the present volume LEPELLEY shows that in North Africa the process of decline of the cities was very gradual, that it affected some regions more than others, and that it became dramatic only as late as the late sixth or even the early seventh century.³⁴ The total abandonment of some of the sites may be much later still. Some regions of North Africa certainly saw a boom under the Arabs.³⁵ But it remains a fact that many cities eventually did come to an end, particularly in the inland regions. These are the cities whose Roman remains have been so well preserved, and they have been preserved precisely because the sites had ceased to be inhabited. It also seems certain that Christianity weakened much faster in North Africa than in the Arab Near East. But we still know very little about the chronology of the process. Wars with the Berbers may have been a contributory factor. But as LEPELLEY points out, Berber wars cannot provide a complete explanation.

In the cities of the East the third century marks less of a turning point than in the West. The appearance of cities changed much less. By and large the eastern cities shrank neither in area nor in population until the second half of the sixth or even the early seventh century. On the contrary, in parts of the East especially in Syria, Palestine and Arabia cities expanded, as shown by Stephan WESTPHALEN.³⁶ One consequence of this was that the urban violence, which Michael WHITBY³⁷ has discussed, remained a widespread and indeed a growing problem in the cities of this area, as it did not in the West. The explanation of factional violence remains problematical. I explained the faction riots as an expression of growing popular discontent as a consequence of the administration by notables becoming less transparent and less answerable to the population than administration by the *curiales* had been, and suggested that the factions' strength and resilience depended ultimately on widespread popular support.³⁸ WHITBY in this volume puts forward plausible arguments against my position. The difficulty is that while we have quite full descriptions of the riots,³⁹ we have very little evidence directly bearing on the underlying social circumstances.

In the East secular monumental buildings were still being reconstructed or even built from scratch in some cities as late as the sixth century. But by then new construction was mainly of churches. The building of churches started quite slowly and became widespread only from the late fourth century. In the sixth century many regions of the East saw the building of numerous churches.⁴⁰ In the large villages on the fringes of the Arabian deserts churches seem more often than not to have been founded by private individuals, and to be closely associated with

³⁴ One might say that the development of cities in Byzantine North Africa is more like the development in Asia Minor than in Spain, Gaul or in Italy.

³⁵ Cf. Thébert/Biget 1990.

³⁶ See above 181–197; cf. also Jones Hall 2004.

³⁷ See above 441–446.

³⁸ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 249–257.

³⁹ See above 443–448. Whitby's arguments are linked to a 'model' assuming essential continuity of civic government from government by *curiales* to government by notables, while mine are based on a 'model' emphasizing discontinuity.

⁴⁰ Cf. Michel 2001.

specific blocks of houses. It looks as if the foundation of churches here as elsewhere was exploited by individuals and family groups to increase their prestige and influence in local society.⁴¹

Asia Minor is full of ruined cities, many of them extremely impressive. Contemporary scholars are steadily increasing our knowledge of the history and archaeology of these sites. One might mention the work of Wolfgang Brandes, Clive Foss, Stephen Mitchell, Mark Whittow, Klaus Rheidt, and Charlotte Roueché among many others.⁴² It is clear that this area flourished through much of Late Antiquity. But many problems remain. Urbanisation certainly went into sharp decline in the seventh century, but when did this decline start? Did it start everywhere at the same time, or at different times in different areas? And how is it to be explained? Was it principally the Persian invasion and the Arab raids that ruined the urban system of Asia Minor, or can natural causes, plague and earthquakes, and perhaps climatic change, also be shown to have made a significant contribution to the running down of urbanisation? Is there any evidence of significant changes in the economy? Did the fifth and sixth centuries see a shift of activity and resources from cities to the countryside? Even the Christianisation of Asia Minor is still imperfectly understood.⁴³ In this volume Werner Tietz's survey of important recent archaeological research on the cities of Lycia shows that no signs of urban decline can be found that is to be dated earlier than the plague of 541/42. Archaeology in Lycia has been concerned with villages as well as towns.⁴⁴ It is of course impossible to understand the development of cities without taking into account developments in the countryside.⁴⁵ Marc Waelkens and his team are facing the problem of town and country head on.⁴⁶ Their project combines systematic excavation of the city of Sagalassos with surveys of the surrounding territory.⁴⁷ I am sure that everybody is looking forward to their final results. Andrew Poulter is doing something similar at Nicopolis ad Istrum in the Balkans, an area that does not figure in this volume.⁴⁸ The Sagalassos team, and also the team working at Aphrodisias under R.R.R. Smith and Christopher Ratté⁴⁹ have now set themselves the task of excavating ordinary housing, which is absolutely essential if we are to make progress in understanding the functioning and development of ancient cities.⁵⁰ When we have had more excavations of

⁴¹ Cf. Jäggi/Meier 1997.

⁴² See also the papers in Parrish 2001.

⁴³ See Trombley 1994, 52–133; Hart 2001; Caseau 2004. There is also the paradox that while in the sixth century bishops were given more legal power than ever before, it was the fourth and fifth centuries which produced most of the famous bishops (cf. Mitchell 1993, 121).

⁴⁴ See above 257–281.

⁴⁵ See Westphalen 189–192 above; Graf 2001; Rautman 2001; and the essays in Bowden/Lavan/Machado 2004 (esp. Baird 2004).

⁴⁶ Cf. Vanhaverbeke/Waelkens 2003.

⁴⁷ See above 199–255.

⁴⁸ See Poulter forthcoming on the lower Danube provinces, and Chevalier 1996; Duval/Marin 2000 on the abundant late church building in Dalmatia.

⁴⁹ Cf. Ratté 2001.

⁵⁰ On ordinary housing in Egypt, see Alston 2002, 44–127; also Hasselman 1979. On late antique housing generally: Sodini 1995/97.

that kind we will be able to provide better answers to many of the questions discussed at the Munich meeting.

Was Post-Curial Government Significantly Different?

We have noted that there is clear evidence that around AD 500 there took place an important change in the way cities were governed, a change from government by *curiales* to government by notables. It is a question of some importance whether this was a decisive turning point, as I have assumed, or a stage in a much more gradual process as Giovanni CECCONI has argued in connection with the civic élite of Late Antique Italy.⁵¹ Avshalom LANIADO has assembled the evidence for the evolution of Late Antique civic government in the East in an important monograph.⁵² His conclusion is that government by notables did replace government by *curiales*, but he interprets this as a change in terminology rather than substance. In his view the notables who are seen to be in charge of civic affairs in the Novels of Justinian were basically the same kind of people performing the same functions as the *curiales* had done before them.⁵³

This conclusion remains to my mind debatable. The fact that there was a new constitutional terminology in itself makes it likely that there also was a significant change in the substance of civic government. The character of the new terminology indicates a change of a particular kind. For the words used in the laws of the later 6th century to describe the groups involved in the government of cities, that is *oikētores*, *ktētores* and *proteuontes* (inhabitants, landowners, leading men) all have a wide range of reference, so that one would expect their meaning in the context of municipal administration to be given a precise and unambiguous definition. In fact the laws never define how an individual became qualified to belong to one of these groups. This is quite different from earlier legislation in which constitutional terms like *curia*, *curialis* and *principalis* had a definite significance. This suggests, to me at least, that the functioning of civic government had changed significantly, that its organisation had become less well defined and less uniform from city to city, and that the imperial government ceased to be interested in the precise constitutional arrangements of provincial cities. My interpretation of these changes can be read elsewhere.⁵⁴ But in any case the laws strongly suggest that in the 6th century the old civic council (the *curial/boulē*) had lost its responsibility for the city. Indeed it seems to be the case that in many cities the old council building was abandoned or transferred to another use.⁵⁵ Yet there is no evidence that a new standing institution took the place of the

⁵¹ See above 297–302.

⁵² Laniado 2002.

⁵³ Ibid. 254: "l'accès des notables à l'ordre sénatorial ne modifie pas le caractère local des aristocraties municipales: ce sont toujours des citoyens éminents d'abord et des sénateurs ensuite".

⁵⁴ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 104–136.

⁵⁵ See above 220, 226 (Sagalassos); also Roueché 1989, 79f. (Aphrodisias); and more

old civic council. At any rate while the laws are addressed to the notables, that is *ktētores* (possessores) and *proteuontes* (primates), they are never addressed to a formal assembly of notables. Indeed they do not even have a word to describe such an assembly.⁵⁶ To me the fact that there was a new terminology suggests that there also was a new situation which the terminology reflects, with the result that the cities were now administered by an authority which was altogether much less formally regulated, and less open to public scrutiny than that of the *curiales* had been. It does therefore not seem to be simply a coincidence that by the second half of the 6th century in many cities of the East the forum was falling into decay, and streets and public spaces were being encroached upon by private buildings.⁵⁷ This does look as if the municipal authorities had either lost control, or interest, or both. At the same time financing of civic services by liturgies, that is by competitive munificence, had largely, but not entirely, come to an end.⁵⁸ These changes suggest that there had been significant change both in civic organisation and ideology.

Curiales continued to exist,⁵⁹ but they seem to have become a small minority among the civic élite.⁶⁰ It is doubtful whether from the later fifth century many civic notables were still in any sense *curiales*, or even the descendants of *curiales*. On the contrary, it is at least arguable that most of them represented a class of 'new men', or descendants of 'new men', who had risen in the imperial service.⁶¹ The fact that the 'new' notables, like the *curiales* before them, were landowners does not mean that they must necessarily have held the same views of what duties they owed to their city. After all in the course of history landowners have been responsible for running a great variety of systems of government. Apart from the changing secular context, deeper Christianisation and the growing influence of bishop and clergy in the city are likely to have made a considerable difference to the political culture.

Whether one treats these changes as an aspect of a gradual transformation of society in response to a changing social and political context, or as marking the

generally Lavan 2003, 317–321. Cf. also Feissel 1999, 122–124 (abandonment of all buildings of the old Agora, including the *bouleuterion*, at Ephesus); Jäggi 1990, esp. 166 (abandonment of the forum between the late 4th and the mid 5th century at Aquileia).

⁵⁶ For a different view, see Laniado 2002, 211–214.

⁵⁷ In the West the dereliction of public buildings began more than a century earlier, but there it was probably linked to insecurity and impoverishment, which was not the case in the East.

⁵⁸ Liebeschuetz 2001a, 170–175. The fact that the Justinianic Code retains so many laws recalling *curiales* from posts in the imperial service or the Church suggests that they still performed important duties in a significant number of cities. CJ 3.3.52.1 (531); Cassiod. Var. 9.4; Greg. M. Epist. 4.26 suggest that exaction of taxes was still their characteristic duty. But Nov. Iust. 6.1 (535); 38 (535); 87 (539); 123.1. 4, 15 (546) show that the government was more concerned to keep the property than the person of a *curialis* at the disposal of his city. A *curialis* who forsook his council would have to cede three quarters of his property.

⁵⁹ In the East the *curiae* were formally abolished only in Nov. 46.8 of Leo VI (886–912).

⁶⁰ The early 7th-century fiscal papyrus of Hermopolis lists only 3 or 4 *politouomenoi*, but very many more individuals of senatorial rank: 40 *lamprotatoi* (men and women) and 12 *illustrioi*. See Gascou 1994, 62.

⁶¹ Banaji 2001, 134–170.

end of an epoch, or as the dawning of another, is a question of historical perspective. Constitutional politics of the classical type certainly did not exist during the Middle Ages, until they were rediscovered in the Renaissance. When did they disappear? There is inevitably something arbitrary about assigning turning points in history.⁶² But if there is a point in time when the classical politics can be said to have come to an end in the cities of the East, I would argue that it was the taking over of municipal government by notables in the reign of Anastasius.

It is clear that the development of the *curiae* was not the same in the East and the West. There is good evidence that the civic councils continued to play an important role in the cities of the West far longer than in the East.⁶³ There is thus no single point in time when post-curial government can be said to have begun in the West. In Italy the Gothic wars of Justinian produced a tremendous upheaval and mark a significant turning point. But there probably was a great deal of regional diversity in the West also in this field.

The Factors Making for Change

Late Antiquity was an age that saw much change: transformation, innovation, growth, but also as I insist, destruction, shrinking, narrowing of horizons, in brief, decline. But what caused the change? Our literary and epigraphic evidence allows us to observe two causes of change in great detail: the Fall of the Empire, and Christianisation. The impact of the first has loomed large in traditional histories of the Later Roman Empire. It is not prominent in the essays in this volume, as it has not been in much of the recent scholarly work on the period. On the other hand Christianisation is central to several contributions. It is now becoming clear that the Christianisation of the cities of the Empire was considerably slower than has been thought in the past. This is clearly shown in all the regional surveys of this volume: in many cities in most regions the proliferation of churches begins only in the late fourth century or even later.⁶⁴ The same seems true for institutional and social changes connected with Christianisation: Avshalom LANIADO argues plausibly that the text of a law of 409 which has been preserved as CJ 1.55.8 does not represent the law as originally promulgated, but as amended by the editors of Justinian's Code (529–34). According to LANIADO the original law had not included the bishop and clergy among the electors of the *defensor civitatis*.⁶⁵ They were inserted by Justinian's editors who brought the old law of 409 up to date by interpolating a sentence which incorporates an extension of the bishop's authority into the secular sphere that seems to have occurred only

⁶² To mention just one example: the reorganisation of the Empire by Diocletian has long, and with considerable justification, been seen as a turning point in municipal government, but as Cecconi (above 286–297) and Witschel (above 368–375) have argued the affairs of Italian cities display continuity as well as discontinuity across the reign of Diocletian.

⁶³ Jones 1964, 761 n. 110; on *curiales* in Merovingian Gaul: Loseby above 89–92.

⁶⁴ See also Duval 1994; Hellenkemper 1994.

⁶⁵ See above 319–334.

in the reign of Anastasius (491–518).⁶⁶ Jens-Uwe KRAUSE presents a mass of evidence from secular legislation, the acts of church councils and the correspondence of pope Gregory the Great which illustrates the social origins and status of the ordinary clergy. On the basis of this he concludes that clerics were often of relatively humble origin, and that there was a very large gap between the status of a bishop and that of the clergy, and also between that of a landowner and the clerics serving the church on his estate.⁶⁷ Most of the evidence discussed is from the West. Historians have on the whole neglected the ordinary clergy. There is probably still a lot to be said on this subject.

The breakdown of the imperial system and the rise of the Church were certainly powerful factors driving social change in Late Antiquity. It is indeed likely that they were more influential than any others. But they were certainly not the only ones. For instance Marxists have placed great stress on the consequences of the failure of the 'slave economy'.⁶⁸ This volume does not include any contribution written from a Marxist point of view, but Noel LENSKI assembles evidence that publicly owned slaves continued to be employed in the service of cities into the fourth century, and goes on to discuss the implications of what seems to have been a significant decline in their employment in the course of the later fourth and early fifth centuries.⁶⁹ There may have been other factors at work as well: Archie DUNN studying the archaeology of settlements in Macedonia and Northern Greece argues that it provides evidence for a process of progressive decentralisation, that is the delegation of the function of cities to rural settlements, with the result that many cities lost city status, while villages and forts acquired sophisticated stone fortifications and churches and sometimes bishops, all of which had previously been distinguishing features of cities.⁷⁰ It may well be that something of this kind happened elsewhere too. Peter VAN MINNEN points out that the Antonine plague (perhaps smallpox?) could have resulted in a sharp decline in the population of Egypt which was never entirely made good.⁷¹ Other social, economic and perhaps even climatic factors⁷² must have played their part. In an extremely interesting book Jairus BANAJI has argued that it was the establishment of an abundant gold currency in the second half of the fourth century that launched the economic boom of Late Antiquity in the Near East.⁷³ The trouble here is that activities that do not involve politics (taken in its widest sense) or religion do not figure prominently in ancient literature, and are therefore very difficult to observe, and even more difficult to assess. That is one of the

⁶⁶ See Laniado 2002, 173f. On the relatively slow extension of the bishop's power see also Rebillard/Sotinel 1998.

⁶⁷ See above 413–439.

⁶⁸ E.g. the chapter "From slave to *colonus*" in De Ste Croix 1981, 226–259.

⁶⁹ See above 335–357.

⁷⁰ Dunn 2004, with references also to Dunn's earlier work.

⁷¹ See Scheidel 2001a; on malaria see Sallares 2002. On the 6th century bubonic plague, cf. Sarris 2002, 169–79.

⁷² Gunn 2000.

⁷³ Banaji 2001, 39–88.

reasons why not very much was said about them at the Munich meeting, and why they do not occupy a great deal of space in my own book.

Egypt and its papyrus documents offer a route into these more obscure areas.⁷⁴ The physical environment of Egypt and the history of Egypt are of course unique, even in the Near East; but in the last few years scholars have concluded that, in Late Antiquity, the institutions of Egypt were much more like those of its neighbouring provinces than they had been in earlier times. This means that that we should use the information provided by the papyri to throw light on other Near Eastern regions which lack such documentation. Furthermore the papyri provide evidence that can be quantified, and which therefore enables scholars to attempt to discuss social and economic trends in numerical terms, and to formulate answers to questions such as: did the total population grow or did it decline? Did taxation become heavier or lighter? Did rents rise or fall, farms become more or less productive?⁷⁵ Papyri make it possible to discuss the population of cities, the number of slaves, the occupations of the urban population, the scale of the textile and other industries.⁷⁶ Egypt provides tax registers from which we can estimate the level of taxation,⁷⁷ and accounts that illustrate the functioning of a monetary economy. It also allows us to observe the interaction and division of function between city and village much more comprehensively than anywhere else.⁷⁸ VAN MINNEN's chapter in fact includes a compact economic history of Late Roman Egypt, which is both interesting and controversial.⁷⁹

A methodology that has not featured prominently at the Munich discussions is the argument from models based on more recent and more fully documented cities. This is the approach associated with the late Keith HOPKINS, and now with Walter SCHEIDEL.⁸⁰ Another development in urban history is to examine the transformation of cities against a regional background, and to make the basic unit of study not the single city but a regional network of cities.⁸¹ To understand the functioning of a city it is necessary to study its interrelation not only with the surrounding countryside and but also with other cities, that is to study city networks. This is difficult to do for the cities of Antiquity and has scarcely been attempted, but Neville MORLEY has begun by studying the impact of Rome on the surrounding areas of Italy.⁸² It is also the case that in order to assess what it is

⁷⁴ See above 154–161 for van Minnen's extremely useful survey of the evidence. He comments that 95% of known papyri have not yet been published.

⁷⁵ Cf. Rathbone 1991.

⁷⁶ Bagnall 1993, 82–88.

⁷⁷ Bagnall 2003; cf. Jones 1964, 264 (he works with a higher rate of tax than that argued for by Bagnall).

⁷⁸ Alston 2002 has an enormous amount of information of the kind available only from Egypt.

⁷⁹ He concludes that Egypt in the 6th century, though more productive and prosperous than in the fourth century, was still considerably less so than it had been under the Early Empire before the Antonine plague. If this is right it would suggest that the economic development of Egypt was not in step with the rest of the East.

⁸⁰ Hopkins 1978; 1980; 2002; this is also the approach of the contributors to Scheidel 2001b.

⁸¹ Astill 2000, 214–234; esp. 222f.

⁸² Morley 1996.

happening to a city it is necessary to look at it as a whole. Decay in one area might well be balanced by innovation and even expansion in another.⁸³ Unfortunately ancient historians are rarely in a position to take such a comprehensive view.

The use of comparative models and the study of networks rather than just individual cities are two techniques which are probably indispensable if progress is to be made in the debate over the economic role of the Greco-Roman city. In the last decades there has been a reaction against the view of the economic functions of cities held by Max Weber, A.H.M. Jones and Moses Finley, the model which stresses the overwhelming importance of agriculture in the economy of the cities, and minimises their contribution to manufacture and commerce.⁸⁴ The present position might tentatively be summarised as follows: cities did have a significant role in manufacture, and in the distribution of manufactured articles, raw materials and agricultural products, and their economic role did provide a substantial factor in the growth, prosperity, and even the survival of Greco-Roman cities. But the importance of the economic role varied very greatly from city to city, and it is still very much less well understood than the cities' administrative, political and cultural roles and their role as centres of consumption.⁸⁵ And if the question is approached from the point of view of the proportion of human and natural resources devoted on the one hand to manufacture, distribution and commerce, and on the other to agriculture, administration and politics as well as consumption, the Weber/Jones/Finley view still looks very attractive.⁸⁶

Another recent development has been a rehabilitation of the positive economic role of great estates. Peter Sarris has argued that the growth of large estates in the East was an important factor in the Late Antique boom in that area,⁸⁷ and Chris Wickham has pointed out that the existence of large estates in northern Gaul and their absence in Britain can account for the striking differences between the material cultures in the two areas.⁸⁸

Wickham has also produced the most plausible general theory to account for the breakup of the ancient Mediterranean trade system, and of much of the material simplification that accompanied it. He argues that the boom in commerce under the Roman Empire was made possible by subsidised movement of corn and other resources on a very large scale on behalf of the imperial government to Rome and the frontier armies, because private traders could have their goods carried on subsidised transport. Accordingly the fading out of most of this trade was a somewhat drawn-out consequence of the ending of government

⁸³ Cf. Lilley 2000.

⁸⁴ See Hopkins 1978; Parkins 1997; Andraeu 2002. The whole of Scheidel/von Reden 2002 is essentially a discussion of Finley's book.

⁸⁵ Wilson 2001; 2002a; 2002b. Of course manufacturing activities that are urban today need not have been so in Antiquity.

⁸⁶ Hopkins 2002; Saller 2002.

⁸⁷ Sarris 2004.

⁸⁸ Wickham 2003, 398 proposes the interesting and challenging generalisation: "If any given region has neither a rich state nor rich landowners, then by and large its peasantry will be more prosperous. However, its economic infrastructure will be weaker, its buying-power will be heavily decentralised, and its material culture will be simpler".

subsidised transport.⁸⁹ This is what Mark WHITTOW has called the 'Fiscal Model' which he argues ought to be supplemented by the 'Intensification and Abatement Model' put forward by Peregrine HORDEN and Nicholas PURCELL.⁹⁰ The latter model stresses the importance of cycles of more and less intensive exploitation of land and other natural resources, like the alternation of phases of nomadic uses of land with agricultural use on the fringe of the Arabian desert. These cycles are certainly real and important, but they are a function of the physical circumstances in which historical events take place. The phenomena discussed by HORDEN and PURCELL interact with historical developments and set parameters for the impact social human action can have on its environment. Geography, geology and climate certainly influenced the decline (or if you like transformation) of the Empire and the way of life of its inhabitants, particularly on a regional level. But I don't think that they can provide a model for explaining the decline (or transformation) itself.⁹¹

Niedergang oder Wandel, Decline or Transformation?

So far I have avoided the question of whether what happened to cities ought to be classified as transformation or as decline. But that does not mean that the concept of decline has no application to this period. The reader of this book cannot fail to observe that sooner or later, in some regions already in the fourth century, in others in the fifth, in still others in the sixth or even in the seventh century important aspects of the urban civilization of classical antiquity went into dramatic decline. The imperial structure came to an end, the pagan cults were replaced by Christianity, the classical institutions of civic self-government disappeared, and with them the classical concept of what a city should look like. It is likely that in many parts of the Empire land went out of cultivation, and the population was greatly reduced. Where, and when these developments happened it is the duty of a historian to find out, and when a historian notices phenomena reflecting social or economic 'abatement' he surely must be allowed to use the word 'decline'. Of course the period under discussion did not see only decline, it also saw innovation and growth (though not 'intensification'). The historian must take note of both, but a particular historian will be more interested in one phenomenon than the other, and decline is just as proper a subject for historical research as growth or transformation.

Besides that decline and transformation are not mutually exclusive alternatives. Whether one sees what happened to cities in Late Antiquity as transformation or as decline depends on one's point of view. History is a process of

⁸⁹ Wickham 1994. See also the wide-ranging survey of Ward-Perkins 2000.

⁹⁰ Whittow 2003; Horden/Purcell 2000.

⁹¹ For some critical comments on Horden/Purcell 2000 (which are not intended to deny the importance of their book) see Liebeschuetz 2002. I also think that Horden/Purcell observe the cycles of 'intensification and abatement' in a longer and more impersonal perspective than that employed by other historians.

transformation. 'Time's ever-rolling stream' flows on without break or interruption. But in order to give this process significance, the historian, particularly if he wants to write diachronic history,⁹² has to isolate and select particular developments, which inevitably have a beginning and an end, that is an origin, growth and decline. Whether a historian focuses on 'decline', on 'continuity' or on 'innovation', depends on what interests him or her. People will always be intrigued by the question why the amazing Roman Empire came to an end, that is by the story of its Decline and Fall, as in the eighteenth century Edward Gibbon was intrigued by it. GIBBON had a particular reason for seeing the Later Empire as a period of decline. He was a man of the Enlightenment. He wanted to roll back the influence of the Church and enlarge the secular sphere of society. So he regretted the "triumph of barbarism and Christianity", and he accordingly entitled his work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Henri Irenée MARROU was a liberal catholic, who was interested in finding an ideal of Christian culture that was at the same time traditional and appropriate to modern circumstances.⁹³ He found inspiration in the writings of St Augustine, and decided that Augustine used what at first sight seemed traditional classical forms to express a view of the world which was neither classical nor yet medieval. MARROU felt that this new intellectual word needed a name. He proposed *culture de la théopolis*, but he also pointed out that the Germans had already created the name *Spätantike*, i.e. Late Antiquity. So in 1949 he wrote his *Retractatio*, arguing that the thought of Augustine had to be assessed in the context of the culture of his time, and that it was wrong to consider that culture a culture of decadence.⁹⁴ This was a real turning point in studies of the late Roman period: the proclamation of the autonomy of the civilisation of Late Antiquity.⁹⁵ Peter BROWN and others have followed in MARROU's footsteps. But the difference between the assessment of GIBBON and that of MARROU has nothing to do with the historical reality of Late Antiquity. The difference is a matter of point of view: GIBBON wrote as a man of the Enlightenment, MARROU as a committed Catholic. Late Antiquity like every period of history involves transformation, as well as growth and decline. In fact none of these can happen without the others.

I want to make a final point. Today many, though not all, would agree that there was a great deal of decline going on in Late Antiquity, but few if any would therefore condemn the entire age and its culture as a decadent age. What has changed? I think the point is that at least since the Renaissance, and until quite recently, the civilisation of the Greco-Roman world, especially its literature,

⁹² It is not a coincidence that much of the writing of the 'Late Antiquity School' is synchronic; it provides an overall view rather than a sequence of events or developments in chronological order.

⁹³ See Riché 2003.

⁹⁴ Marrou 1949, 663–699, esp. 694f.

⁹⁵ The concept of Late Antiquity as a distinctive period that stands on its own has a prehistory involving the Viennese art historian Alois Riegl (1858–1905; cf. Riegl 1901), the writings of the *religionswissenschaftliche Schule* of Göttingen (from around 1890–1925, see Simon 1975; Marchand 2003), and Oswald Spengler's eschatological *Untergang des Abendlandes* (1920–22, first draft 1912). Cf. Bähler 1999.

philosophy, politics and art were seen as examples which modern society needed to emulate. The fact that their own society was so different from that of Greece and Rome was thought to be a bad thing and therefore the change which had produced these inferior societies involved deterioration, that is decline. In the last fifty years our society has abandoned the view that the achievements of the classical world should be emulated, and no longer finds them to be of unique relevance. Consequently we no longer consider the disappearance of the classical world an unmitigated disaster. But this does not alter the fact that the end of the classical world did involve a great deal both of loss and of decline, and the historian, when he meets these phenomena, should be allowed to call them by their proper name.⁹⁶ Does it matter? I think it does. Because banning discussion of decline leads – and to some extent already has led – to a denial that anything involving loss ever happened, and that gives a very one-sided view of the past, and indeed of human existence.

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⁹⁶ I am not putting forward 'decline' as a 'model', a procedure rightly rejected by Whitton 2001, 137. Here and elsewhere I use the word as the appropriate term to describe many developments that happened in Late Antiquity. Like most words 'decline' has been applied in a very wide range of contexts, including some which are politically undesirable. But I don't think a word should be blacklisted because of the use which some writers have made of it (otherwise Cameron 2003).

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